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NAVY NEWS

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DARING DEEDS

A DAY AT SEA WITH THE WONDER DESTROYER

LOWER THE BANNER

815 NAS PULL OUT OF NORTHERN IRELAND

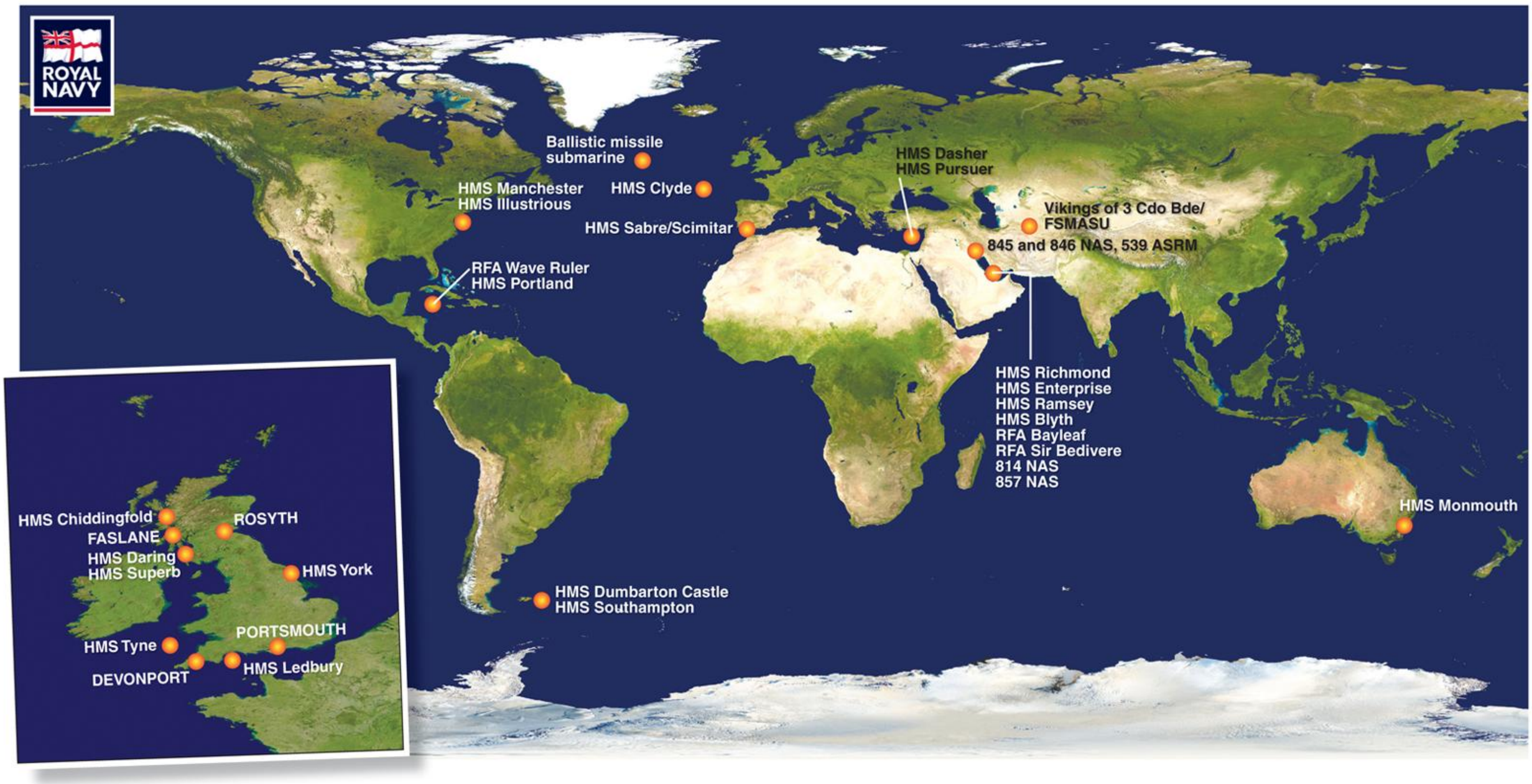
HARRIER jump jets of the US Marine Corps line the flight deck of HMS Illustrious as Anglo-American war games reach their climax off the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. Britain's strike carrier sailed in company with the American 'super carriers' USS Harry S Truman and Dwight D Eisenhower, commanding one of three battle groups during Exercise Bold Step.

See pages 8, 16 and 17 for more details.

Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen, HMS Illustrious

BOLD MOVES

GLOBAL REACH



Fleet Focus

NOW that summer is over (apparently this year it was on a Thursday), the men and women of the RN are returning from leave.

But don't be fooled that the Senior Service shuts down in August; a quick look at our map above shows otherwise.

Furthest flung from home is frigate **HMS Monmouth**, currently edging her way around the Pacific rim from Australia (*see right*) to the Philippines then on to China and Japan before heading for Hawaii.

A few thousand miles to the west, the Gulf remains choc-a-bloc with RN/RFA vessels. **HMS Richmond** has replaced **HMS Cornwall** off Iraq, defending the oil platforms (*see opposite*), while survey ship **HMS Enterprise** is gathering data to improve surprisingly dated charts of the region's waters (*see page 7*). At the tip of the Gulf our ship of the month **RFA Sir Bedivere** is serving as a mother ship to the Iraqi Navy (*see page 14*).

HMS Ramsey and **Blyth** left Bahrain – and the Gulf – behind to head to Muscat for exercises with the Omani Navy (*see page 6*).

And talking of small ships, the Orion task force – minehunters **Hurworth**, **Atherstone**, **Walney** and **Shoreham** – are back in the UK after their tour of the Mediterranean and Black Sea (*turn to page 6*).

The aviators of the US Marine Corps provide a unique perspective on life aboard **HMS Illustrious** (*see pages 16-17*), which was ably supported on its US deployment by the busy bees of **HMS Manchester** (*see page 8*).

Also in the Americas are **RFA Wave Ruler** and **HMS Portland**, continuing the squeeze on drug runners. Portland was also on stand-by to provide assistance to islands hit by Hurricane Dean as we went to press (*see opposite*).

In the South Atlantic, **HMS Southampton** has been riding some rough seas around the Falklands (*see page 7*) where guardship **HMS Dumbarton Castle** is waiting to be replaced by **HMS Clyde** so she can retire with grace (*see opposite*).

Now back from the Falklands is **HMS Edinburgh**, crewed latterly by the sailors of **HMS Exeter** as part of the sea swap experiment (*see page 4*).

Also in home waters, **HMS York** paid a visit to her namesake city before the destroyer enters a year-long refit (*see page 4*).

While much of the media attention was lavished on the Army's withdrawal from Northern Ireland, the fliers of **815 NAS** were quietly conducting their final deployment in the Province (*see page 12*).

RNAS Culdrose drew record crowds for its annual air day (*see page 10*), while aircrew from **771 NAS** based at the Cornish establishment have been honoured for bravery above and beyond the call of duty for rescuing 26 sailors of the ill-starred MV Napoli (*see page 40*).

Safety matters, too, for Portsmouth's Volunteer Harbour Patrol which provides advice to mariners in and around Pompey and is looking to bolster its numbers (*see page 11*).

Not one but two ships have been blessed by visits from veteran entertainer/DJ Sir Jimmy Savile, **HMS Chiddingfold** in Oban on survey duties (*see page 6*) and **RFA Mounts Bay** in Leith for the Edinburgh Festival (*see page 31*).

Apart from hosting the king of jingle jangle and jump suits, the 'fishbusters' of **HMS Chiddingfold** have enjoyed a particularly fruitful summer (*see page 6*), while **HMS Tyne** has been busy in the Irish Sea and Western Approaches (*see page 32*).

The fourth and final new amphibious landing ship, **Lyme Bay**, has been handed over to the Royal Fleet Auxiliary (*see page 5*).

And finally... one ship has hogged the media limelight this past month: Type 45 destroyer **HMS Daring**. We joined her on her hugely-successful sea trials off Largs (*see pages 7 and 24-25*).

The grand old lady of the Fleet wasn't to be outdone by this upstart, however. Hunter-killer submarine **HMS Superb** had Daring firmly in her sights during exercises off Scotland (*see page 5*).

Golden times for Black Duke

THE Black Duke's second visit to Australia was also the most high profile and longest stop on her world tour.

For two and a half weeks, HMS Monmouth was berthed in the RAN base at Garden Island in Sydney – which offered a stunning view of the famous Harbour Bridge, the top of the Opera House and the stunning north shore of the city.

The first few days of the visit were crammed with the diplomatic events which are a pre-requisite of every port visit: the official reception and Ceremonial Sunset against a backdrop of Sydney's skyscrapers and lights was particularly memorable.

The break in Sydney had a twofold aim: to overhaul the Devonport frigate and to give sailors a well-deserved rest.

Families and girlfriends were flown out and then promptly dispersed across Sydney and the Gold Coast with their loved ones.

Also flown out from Blighty were support staff to oversee the upkeep period, aided by Australian expertise from Thales.

The engineers gave the 4.5in main gun, sensors and engine room kit a thorough servicing ahead of the final four months of the deployment.

Those sailors who were not able to take leave still made the most of their time ashore by attending numerous gigs, enjoying the nightlife and even attempting some skydiving.

A couple of Black Dukes were even able to try flying, courtesy of a very generous former RN lieutenant, John Gilbert, while many of their shipmates enjoyed a performance at the iconic Sydney Opera House.

"Sydney has, without doubt, been an outstanding visit for the Black Duke and her ship's company," said Commanding Officer Cdr Tim Peacock.

"Invaluable maintenance work has been achieved, relations with the Royal Australian Navy have been strengthened and all of the sailors have had a thoroughly rewarding time ashore.

"As we leave Sydney with happy memories, our attention turns to the seas and the exotic countries that lie beyond."



● *Fett accompli... No, not a* Star Wars *bounty hunter, but a sailor in HMS Monmouth on the TDS gun director during live-firing exercises between Sydney and Wellington*

Picture: LA(PHOT) Brian Douglas, FRPU Clyde

Kitchen d'or on Richmond

FRIGATE HMS Richmond has completed her first patrol around Iraq's oil platforms as she replaces HMS Cornwall in the northern Arabian Gulf.

Barely had Richmond taken over from Cornwall than she found herself hosting new Armed Forces Minister Bob Ainsworth, acquainting himself with the work of British forces in the Gulf.

After a lightning visit to Richmond, the MP moved on to Umm Qasr to see the Iraqi Navy being trained by the RN and RM.

That training is something Richmond herself has been involved in: a group of rookie Iraqi officers joined the warship for a day to see how the RN conducts its business in great waters – and the Iraqis in turn shared their invaluable local knowledge with the Richmond team.

Despite a punishing operational tempo, sailors have had opportunities to let their (admittedly short) hair down, most notably with the military variant of *Ready Steady Cook*, 'Iron Chef'.

Richmond hosted the international culinary event, with chefs, sorry logisticians(catering services(preparation)), from Australia's HMAS Anzac and the Arleigh Burke-class Aegis destroyer USS Chung Hoon joining their British counterparts in the Type 23's galley.

The chefs were given just 90 minutes to design and prepare as many dishes as possible using five core and one 'secret' ingredient, ranging from something as simple as a packet of soup to as 'exotic' as a Snickers bar.

Declaring the Australians winners of the first round in what was an extremely close competition, Richmond's CO Cdr Piers Hurrell said: "The chefs have worked really hard to create two special menus, both of which were of a very high standard indeed. The stuffed chicken breast prepared by Australian chef AB Chandler was simply delicious."

Round two saw the Brits defeat the Yanks in what was yet another tightly-fought battle.

"Having only 90 minutes to plan and execute a menu is a squeeze, however, we are used to tough conditions and this kind of event just keeps us on our toes," said Richmond's LLOGS(CS) 'Bob' Maidment.

"This competition has been great fun and gave us the opportunity to visit other ships in the Task Force as well as to share culinary ideas with our Coalition partners."

Royal guest for Albion

ASSAULT ship HMS Albion's patron dropped in while the vessel was conducting exercises off the south coast.

The Royal Flight brought Princess Anne to Albion, where she caught up with the ship's company and Albion's permanent Royal Marines detachment 6 Assault Squadron.

Commanding Officer Capt Tim Lowe apprised the Princess Royal of his ship's recent activities, most notably the spring/summer deployment to the Baltic with NATO, followed by a high-profile visit to St Petersburg.

As a souvenir of that deployment, and other recent activities, Capt Lowe presented the royal guest – she launched the assault ship in Barrow six years ago – with a photograph album.

And then it was the turn of Capt Lowe to receive a gift; Princess Anne's visit coincided with his 44th birthday.

In the presence of the princess and his ship's company, the commanding officer was presented with a birthday cake baked by POLOGS(CS) Aris.



Bye bye Clyde

NEW patrol ship HMS Clyde bade farewell to Portsmouth – possibly for good – as she sailed south to begin work.

The souped-up River-class vessel takes over from HMS Dumbarton Castle as the Falklands guardship – and should be half way to her destination by the time you read this.

Clyde will be on duty in the South Atlantic for at least five years under a lease deal with Portsmouth-based shipbuilders VT Group who own and built the warship.

The aim is to carry out maintenance on Clyde in the Southern Hemisphere, rather than bringing her back to Blighty sporadically for an overhaul.

The ship commissioned in July, since when she has been conducting aviation trials – a Sea King from 771 NAS touched down more than 300 times during those tests – and training around the UK.

Once in the Falklands, she will be available for missions on 282 days a year, with her crew being rotated every six months.

Her predecessor will conduct a handover before returning to Portsmouth for decommissioning in November.

Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Wenham, FRPU Whale Island

Storm chasers

TWO Royal Navy vessels were following in the devastating wake of Hurricane Dean, sweeping through the Caribbean as *Navy News* went to press.

Frigate HMS Portland and fleet tanker RFA Wave Ruler broke off from the war against drug traffickers to track the hurricane – the first major storm of the 2007 season.

The pair hung around 150 miles behind the storm as it smashed its way through Jamaica, bound for the Cayman Islands.

The ships watched as Dean grew in strength over a spell of four days from a worrying Category 2 storm (winds of around 100mph) to a vicious Category 4 hurricane (gusts upwards of 150mph).

Portland's ship's company spent 48 hours preparing for potential disaster relief operations, forming specialist teams for first aid, heavy and light rescue missions, and logistical support, while Wave Ruler had fuel and food available should it be needed.

Despite the forecasts, Grand Cayman and its outlying islands were spared the full force of Dean: Portland's Lynx was launched to assess the damage in Grand Cayman – which proved to be much less severe than originally feared.

Dean was not done, however, and grew in strength to earn the dubious distinction of a Category 5 storm (such as Hurricane Ivan in 2004 which devastated Grenada) as it clattered across the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico.

It was expected to strike the Commonwealth country of Belize – and that prompted Fleet planners to order Portland and Wave Ruler to hang on to Dean's coat tails and offer assistance in Belize.

"To be honest, it's been pretty sporty over the past few days," said Cdr Mike Utley, HMS Portland's Commanding Officer.

"Our aim has been to follow the storm closely enough to be able to provide assistance as soon as possible afterwards and help locals to put things back together again."

Portland's sailors had been reminded of the devastation Nature can cause when they sailed up the Mississipi into New Orleans.

More than 700 people lost their lives when Hurricane Katrina – a Category 5 storm – bludgeoned its way through the city in 2005.

The famous port offered a respite for Portland after she conducted a series of boarding operations and exercises around the Mississipi Delta and Gulf of Mexico in conjunction with US forces.

Before Dean struck, the Devonport-based frigate's deployment had been relatively plain sailing.

During anti-drug patrols off St Lucia, sharp-eyed quartermaster LS Darren Stedman spied a vessel in distress – a vessel so small the frigate's radar did not pick it up.

Portland's sea boat was promptly launched and its crew found two fishermen stranded in a boat.

The engine was broken, the men had no means of communication and the fishermen had run out of food and water.

The latter shortcoming was quickly put right by the Portland sailors and the fishermen were given a medical check-up before their boat, Shadrach, was towed back towards St Lucia to be handed over to the local coastguard.

"The crew were waving frantically and appeared very distressed," said LS Stedman. "Who knows what would have happened if we hadn't seen them."

● *A boarding team using HMS Portland's RIB inspects a 'Go-fast' at sunset near Trinidad during counter-drugs operations, while the ship's Lynx watches overhead*

Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden, FRPU Whale Island



GLOBAL REACH

Active duties end for Montrose

FOR every man and woman aboard HMS Montrose, there were three on the quayside in Devonport.

And we're not counting those waving furiously at Devil's Point, The Hoe and Mount Wise, all eager to welcome the frigate home from a seven-month deployment to the Mediterranean.

The Type 23 warship left home at the beginning of the year to join NATO forces on Exercise Active Endeavour, the sweep of the Mediterranean by Allied warships searching for terrorists and criminals which has continued non-stop since the September 11 2001 atrocities.

Much, though not all, of that work was conducted in the eastern Mediterranean, although there was a smattering of port visits for refuelling/R&R/goodwill, including Split in Croatia, Chania in Crete and Patras in Greece.

Montrose's deployment was largely conducted away from the public gaze, although the frigate did save the lives of 11 Turkish sailors who escaped the MV Sunshine, which sank in just ten minutes when its cargo of marble shifted.

That rescue back in April was, apart from the homecoming, probably the highlight of the seven-month tour of duty.

"I'm extremely proud of my ship's company – they've ably met every challenge over a prolonged period," said CO Cdr Tony Watts, who now leaves Montrose to head to the Staff College at Shrivenham.

"The homecoming was not just about the ship and the ship's company – it was also about the people we left behind for seven months.

"Without their support our job would be more difficult. Knowing you have the backing of your family and that their thoughts are with you is essential for morale."

Covering that Exe-tra mile

THE lengthened, slightly sleeker lines, the distinctive castle badge, the pennant number all suggest: HMS Edinburgh.

But there's no hiding the Exe Factor.

Outwardly Edinburgh she may have been, inwardly the Type 42 destroyer was unmistakably HMS Exeter.

Edinburgh arrived home in Portsmouth at the end of July, crewed entirely by the men and women of the good ship Exeter, bringing to an end a ten-month experiment to the South Atlantic.

Fleet Headquarters wanted to see whether it was possible to keep a ship of destroyer or frigate size on station longer by swapping ship's companies part-way through a deployment; nine or ten months are about as much as any ship can manage on deployment before requiring some TLC alongside.

And so Edinburgh's original crew flew home in February to take charge of their sister ship, while their comrades from Exeter flew in the opposite direction to join their new ship in the Falklands.

After a gruelling spring and summer patrolling the Falklands, Edinburgh was finally allowed to relax on the long journey home, first in Rio, then Fortaleze, Brazil, and lastly in Santa Cruz, Tenerife, where there was a final chance to let hair down before home waters.

And how. The sailors decided to replicate the hit talent show *X-Factor*, suitably renamed Exeter Factor.

So much talent is there aboard Exeter that there had to be a series of auditions before the nine headline acts – ranging from boy band '2 Deck Stbd Boys' (*Catchy name – Ed*) to an Abba tribute band a Country and Western performer 'Big Dave'.

No *X-Factor* would be complete without judges. Enter Louis Walsh (aka Lt Alex Simms), 'Mr Nasty' Simon Cowell (who bore an uncanny resemblance to Surg Lt Ed Barnard) and LS Deon Brigdon standing in for Sharon Osbourne.

They picked guitarist/singer CPO Phil Metcalfe as the winner; he picked up £50 for his troubles.

The last leg of the journey home proved eventful for the ship when she picked up a mayday 170 miles of the Scillies: a Spanish fisherman had severed his thumb.

Edinburgh collected the injured sailor by sea boat, then scrambled her Lynx to ferry the casualty to hospital in Truro once the destroyer was within range of the mainland.

Once home in Pompey – it was a glorious morning for their arrival – Edinburgh's original crew moved back aboard, while Exeter's sailors took possession of their old ship after some much-deserved summer leave.

"This has been a deployment with a difference," said Edinburgh CO Cdr Paul Brown.

"We're all delighted to be home and the focus now is on swapping back to our respective ships. The sea swap trial is just one element of a wider trial which aims to make the best use of our resources."

While Edinburgh was at the hub of Falklands 25 commemorations in the South Atlantic, it was perhaps apt that the ship her crew left behind toured the British Isles to pay homage to that war – a war of which Exeter is one of the last serving survivors.

The experiment with 'sea swap' is not just confined to Exeter-Edinburgh; HMS Sutherland in the Gulf earlier this year and minehunters Blyth and Ramsey currently in Bahrain have also been at the heart of the trial.



● *HMS Exeter's ship's company squeeze on to the forecastle of HMS Edinburgh for the final leg of their South Atlantic deployment*

Torbay feels blue all over

HMS Torbay has become the first Trafalgar-class submarine to be raised from the water at Faslane's impressive 'shiplift' facility.

It took two days to dock down the Devonport-based hunter killer as she was lifted completely out of the water.

She will be dry until early next month while she undergoes routine maintenance and her 'bottom' is painted blue (like her upper hull).

Also receiving a mini-overhaul at Faslane is minehunter HMS Pembroke, which will be out of action until mid-month.

By the end of September she should be fully operational once more, ready to conduct detailed route survey operations off the south-west coast of England.

Early October will see the ship alongside in Devonport where she'll also take part in Staff College Sea Days, showing personnel of all three Services from the Joint Staff College at Shrivenham what the RN does, day in, day out.

£1bn reactor deal

THE Silent Service is spending £1bn to save £120m to maintain the nuclear reactors which power its fleet of submarines.

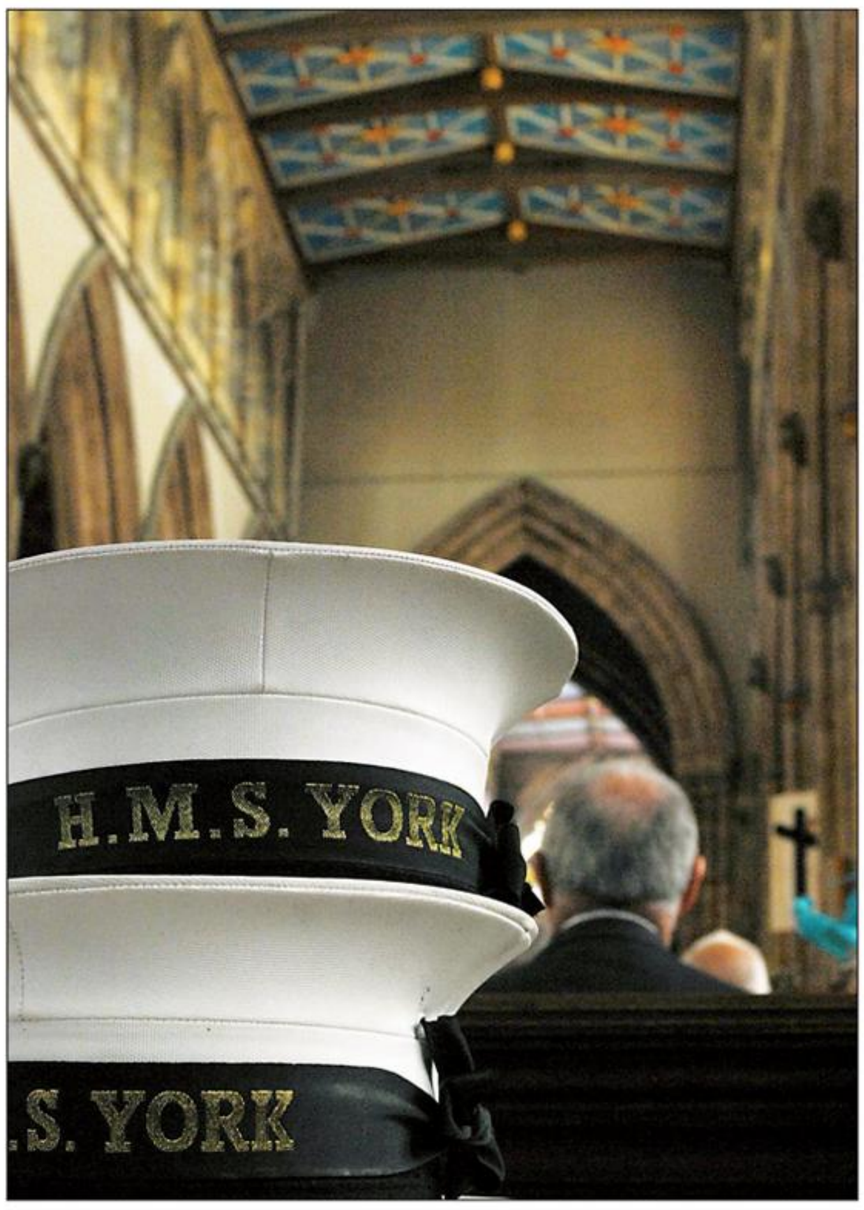
Whitehall has signed a ten-year deal with Rolls-Royce to provide/support all nuclear submarines with the reactors and kit which turns raw energy into high-pressure steam to power the boats' engines and electricity generators.

The all-encompassing deal with the Derby-based division of Rolls-Royce sees the firm take charge of all planning, management and engineering support for the next decade.

Swiftsure and Trafalgar-class hunter killer boats are powered by Mk1 Pressurised Water Reactor Plants and more modern Vanguard and Astute boats by the Mk2 variant of the reactor.

Defence procurement minister Lord Drayson said over the deal's ten-year lifespan the MOD would save more than £120m compared with the existing maintenance deal.

York 'still cuts the mustard'



THE 'white rose' sailors paid the first visit to the city which gives their ship her name in three years.

And the men and women of HMS York won't be back in Yorkshire's county town for some time as the destroyer prepares for a year out of action while she undergoes a major refit.

The visit to York (the ship herself actually berthed in Hull) coincided with Yorkshire Day (*August 1 for those who aren't from God's Own County – Tyke Ed*), a date Yorkshire folk take deadly seriously.

So seriously, in fact, that there was a parade through the streets of Hull by York's crew, a march which ended at the city's Holy Trinity Church where there was a service of commemoration. The Band of HM Royal Marines provided musical accompaniment on this special day with a performance in Victoria Square.

The weekend before Yorkshire Day, sailors from York were on hand at the start of the Clipper Race.

There the Wilberforce Petition – a demand to end the global slave trade – was signed before being presented to the crew of One Hull Tag Team, the local clipper taking part in the race.

Away from Hull, 50 members of the ship's company headed west to York for a day's toil in a nature reserve.

The meadows of Clifton Backies have only been a council-owned reserve for a couple of years after suffering decades of neglect.

"It's the usual story of not enough money and one member of staff trying to do all the work, assisted by groups of school children and OAPs wanting to do some volunteering," said Lt Cdr Karen Allsford, York's Logistics Officer.

The fifty-strong RN work party got to grips with overgrown hedges and helped to improve some of the fencing around the site.

Also in York, seven saddle-sore sailors were waiting to re-join their shipmates.

It took the team, led by clubz LPT Chris Peden, four days to cycle from Spiller's Wharf in Newcastle (the destroyer's previous port of call) to the heart of York, all in aid of Applefields special needs school.

Rather than the 'simple' as-the-crow-flies distance of 88 miles between the two cities, the riders clocked up 180 miles by the time they rode into York.

Before the visits to Hull and York, the ship had been on duty in the North Sea where all manner of aerial threats were thrown at the air defence destroyer.

York spent three weeks on exercises: first, Indra Danush, then Wycombe Warrior.

Indra Danush was an RAF-Indian Air Force war game, with Indian Sukhoi SU-30 Flankers joining more traditional Tornadoes (*pictured*) and Typhoons in the North Sea skies.

York's fighter controllers enjoyed directing these potent jets, before the tables were turned and the ship had to defend herself against (mock) air attacks.

After a weekend break in Den Helder, York teamed up with the F15 Strike Eagles of 494th Fighter Wing from RAF Lakenheath for Wycombe Warrior.

The York/Strike Eagle pairing had to defend themselves – and other friendly forces – in the face of determined 'enemy' aerial assaults, including highly-realistic anti-ship missile attacks and bombing runs.

"This was a rare opportunity to spend an extended period in the excellent training grounds of the North Sea and gave my team the opportunity to gain valuable experience in joint operations," said Cdr Tim Cryar, York's CO.

"HMS York proved that the Type 42 can still cut the mustard in the world of air defence."

Before heading for Hull, the ship found time (and space) to host more than 70 affiliates, including troops from 2nd Signals Regiment, staff from John Smiths brewery, the Worshipful Companies of Merchant Adventurers and Farmers, RNA veterans, and York Lions for a day at sea.

The guests were treated to crash stops, fire-fighting and damage control demonstrations, and a fly past by two RAF Typhoons before they were deposited safely back on dry land again.

Before her year-long revamp in Portsmouth, York has a final mission escorting a carrier battle group this autumn in the Mediterranean.



● *HMS York's sailors remove their caps in Hull's Holy Trinity Church for a Yorkshire Day commemorative service*
Picture: LA(Phot) Tel Boughton, FRPU Clyde

Lyme Bay completes quartet

THE fourth and final of the support ships which have helped to revolutionise 21st-Century RN amphibious operations has been handed over by her builders.

The Royal Fleet Auxiliary took the 'keys' to RFA Lyme Bay in Portland harbour after a month of trials around the UK.

In a marquee on the sprawling flight deck, VIPs, senior naval officers, including the Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent, gathered for a service of dedication with music from Poole Sea Cadets.

"We're proud of all the ships and the class they represent," said CO Capt Peter Farmer. "They can do anything."

Lyme Bay started life at Swan Hunters' yard on the Tyne. When work on her stalled at Wallsend, Whitehall ordered her finished by BAE Systems' Govan yard.

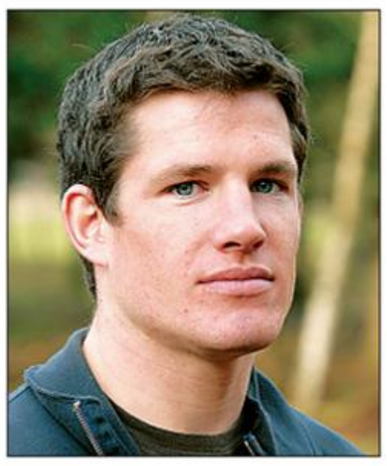
Barely a year after arriving on the Clyde, the finished article was ready for the RFA – nine weeks earlier than BAE had originally predicted.

The ship and her sisters Cardigan, Largs and Mounts Bay provide second-wave support for amphibious operations by the Royal Marines from HM Ships Ocean, Bulwark and Albion, carrying troops and kit into battle.

"Lyme Bay has already received glowing reports – something I expect to continue throughout her service with the RFA," said Vic Emery, head of BAE's Surface Fleet Solutions.

"Everyone at BAE has striven tirelessly to deliver Lyme Bay to such a high standard."

The quartet replace the 'Knights of the Round Table' which have served the nation since the 1960s; of the original knights, only RFA Sir Bedivere still remains in service, supporting training for the Iraqi Navy in the northern Gulf.



Royal Michael 'an example to us all'

ROYAL Marines lost an irreplaceable comrade when L/Cpl Michael Jones was killed in action against insurgents in Afghanistan.

The 26-year-old commando was fatally wounded tackling a "formidable Taleban position" in the province of Nimruz, in south-western Afghanistan.

Hailing from Newbald in East Yorkshire, Michael joined the green berets in 1999, since when he had served with distinction in Kosovo and Iraq, as well as Afghanistan.

"Michael was a truly exceptional non-commissioned officer – the best at his level," said his CO.

"He unflinchingly stood shoulder to shoulder with his friends in the very worst of conditions time after time.

"It will be impossible to replace Michael. He will be remembered as a genuine and loyal friend whose selfless bravery whilst assaulting a formidable Taleban position is an example to us all."

A Superb target



● *Superb leaves Clyde to begin training following her overhaul*
Picture: FRPU Clyde

THE image is a bit blurry but the lines are unmistakable.

Below is the Royal Navy's newest weapon... as seen from her oldest.

As destroyer HMS Daring merrily ploughed through Scottish waters on sea trials, she passed through the sights of HMS Superb, the '*grande dame*' of the Silent Service at 31 years of age.

After seven months out of action undergoing an overhaul, Superb was keen to prove herself to the team from the Flag Officer Sea Training.

And so it was that she 'came across' the Type 45 destroyer on her maiden voyage.

Daring may be the centre of attention in the maritime world presently, but that doesn't mean a venerable lady cannot teach her a thing or two.

"It just goes to show that Superb still has what it takes," said Commanding Officer Cdr Steve Drysdale.

"She's got plenty of life in her yet and the crew really pulled together to ensure the success of our operational sea training.

"I am proud of the professionalism, team spirit and camaraderie displayed during the rigours of work-up, which obviously concluded with this very satisfactory outcome."

The hunter killer, based at Faslane, received improved weapons systems and communications kit while out of action.

Daring has not been Superb's sole prey.

She also played a game of cat-and-mouse with HMS Lancaster, again in Scottish waters.

The frigate's crew doffed shoes and banished stereos in a bid to cut noise and avoid detection by the submarine (as we reported last month – although we couldn't tell you until now that Superb was the boat involved).

"Operational Sea Training was hard work, really tiring. But hugely satisfying," explained the boat's Weapons Engineer Officer Lt Cdr James Richards.

"The whole thing is about getting the crew and the equipment back to sea and make sure that it's totally fit for purpose. It gives us the chance to be monitored while we familiarise ourselves with the boat again and the various tasks which we may have to undertake.

"It is a lesson in flexibility and everyone really pulled together."

Cdr Peter Green, FOST Commander Sea Training, agreed: "Superb has just completed a successful period of training. She came through with flying colours and the team on board performed well."

With summer leave now over, Superb is about to deploy on an undisclosed patrol.



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Men and women in the Royal Marines and Royal Navy serve their country, often at times of danger: the RNBT serves them and their families, at times of need, throughout their lives.
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Examples of assistance given to serving and retired members of the RNBT Family are: resolving housing difficulties (including repairs and finance), facilitating debt counselling and relief, the provision of electrically powered vehicles and stairlifts, help with medical and dental bills and convalescent and respite holidays.
In addition, the Trust runs a first rate care home for up to 19 elderly residents in Gillingham, Kent.

The Royal Naval Benevolent Trust
Castaway House, 311 Twyford Avenue, Portsmouth PO2 8RN
T: 023 9269 0112 F: 023 9266 0852 E: rnbt@rnbt.org.uk W: www.rnbt.org.uk

GLOBAL REACH

It's a small world



● *A magnificent sunset over the North Sea as HMS Ledbury heads for Leith and (below) HMS Chiddingfold's crew reach the top of Pulpit Rock near Stavanger in the murk and mist of a Norwegian summer*

Main picture: S/Lt Rob Garner, HMS Ledbury

DEEDS as diverse as they were dispersed acoss the Seven Seas have been accomplished by some of the smallest vessels which fly the White Ensign.

Sailors from **HMS Grimsby** visited their namesake town to pay their respects to the town's trawlermen.

Grimsby is Britain's principal fishing port (legend even has it that it was founded by a fisherman) and the town's fishing community gathered at St James' Church for a memorial service.

Grimsby's XO Lt Mike Percy and three shipmates represented the mine countermeasures vessel at the service, which was concluded by a wreath-laying ceremony at the town's monument to fishermen who never returned.

While Grimsby's presence was welcomed by fishermen, others who ply their trade in UK waters were less happy to see **HMS Ledbury**.

The Portsmouth-based minehunter is presently attached to the Fishery Protection Squadron – and doing a mighty fine job too.

Working with the Irish warship Niamh in the southern Irish Sea, Ledbury came across a vessel whose crew had committed numerous net and paperwork infringements regarding their haul of hake, angler fish and nephrops.

So serious were the transgressions by the David Liam that the trawler was promptly escorted into Milford Haven where her skipper Denis McCarthy from County Cork was fined more than £18,000.

An even heftier fine was imposed on skipper Simon Armstrong of the scallop dredger Haringvliet, boarded by a team from Ledbury in Lyme Bay.

The sailors found a 'secret hold' where nearly 600kg of sole were hidden – a severe breach of fishing regulations.

Haringvliet was ushered into Brixham and her skipper was walloped with fines totalling almost £24,000.

Not all Ledbury's time has been spent 'doing fish'. The minehunter headed to the Firth of Forth for magazine tests at Crombie.

That meant passing under the Forth rail bridge (covered in scaffolding for renovation work), timed to perfection by navigator S/Lt Rob Garner who avoided any crossing trains, so there was no need to buy the ship's company a drink (good news for him, bad news for his shipmates...).

Navigational prowess was also evident off the Farne Islands in Northumbria.

The islands and the waters around them offer a good test for potential navigators, with narrow channels to negotiate and tight turns to perform.

A more violent test for the minehunter came in the form of four jet skis launching a 'swarm attack' to judge the reaction of her crew in dealing with fast assault craft – something the RN has been acutely aware of since the USS Cole incident seven years ago.

Jet skis can reach speeds in excess of 60mph; flat out, Ledbury can manage barely a quarter of that.

So it was left to some deft manoeuvring from the bridge team and some expert marksmanship from Ledbury's gunners to keep the jet ski 'terrorists' at bay.

Ledbury's sister **HMS Middleton** will be away till the year's end with NATO as Britain's contribution to the Standing Mine Countermeasures Group 1.

The group is one of NATO's longest-standing commitments, carried out for more than half a century.

Middleton joins ships from the Belgian, German, Dutch, Lithuanian, Polish and Norwegian navies on patrols in the waters of northwest Europe and the Baltic.

The force deals with a mixture of wartime ordnance which still litters the sea and exercises to test its efficacy at coping with modern mines.

As Middleton departed, four minehunters brought the curtain down on their Mediterranean/Black Sea deployment.

HM Ships **Atherstone, Hurworth, Shoreham** and **Walney** took part in Exercise Orion, shepherded by their mother ship, new landing support vessel **RFA Cardigan Bay**.

Mother has stayed out (she's currently in Gib), but the 'ducklings' are back in the nest: Shoreham and Walney in Faslane, Atherstone and Hurworth in Portsmouth.

Orion hunted for mines across the Mediterranean, Aegean, Dardanelles, Marmara and Black Sea, with a host of goodwill visits paid by the ships to Allied nations.

"We've been to places rarely visited by the RN and have left a positive impression wherever we went," said Atherstone's CO Lt Cdr Guy Dale-Smith.

"My ship's company have had the opportunity of a lifetime to explore parts of the Mediterranean they would otherwise never get to see."

Also overseas, for the first time in more than two years, was **HMS Chiddingfold**, which headed across the North Sea to Stavanger in Norway as part of her post-refit trials programme.

There was a strong sporting programme lined up for the Portsmouth-based minehunter upon her arrival.

Norway boasts just eight rugby union sides, including one in Stavanger which eagerly awaited a clash with the Brits – and trounced the small ship's 15 70-21 (although Chid's performance may have been hampered by the fact that the match coincided with the port's beer and food festival...).

The warship's climbers and footballers fared rather better: the climbers headed for the top of Pulpit Rock, which hangs 604m (1,981ft) over Leisfjord and offers magnificent views... except when it's shrouded in cloud. The footballers fared somewhat better, dispatching locally-based British NCOs 6-4.

Chid did not just head for Norway to play sport, of course.

The true reason for her visit lies just outside Stavanger at NATO's FORACS range where Allied warships test the accuracy of radar, sonar, GPS, gyros and electronic navigational systems.

Back in British waters, Chiddingfold was charged with survey work off Islay and Mull – her first operational mission since her overhaul.

She took a break from that mission with a day in Oban.

And when in Oban there's only one thing to do. Visit McCaig's Tower? A spot of fishing perhaps? Nope. Host veteran DJ and TV presenter Sir Jimmy Savile, of course.

The jingle-jangle cigar-loving 80-year-old was in town to help the RNLI raise money and was invited aboard the minehunter for an impromptu photoshoot with the ship's company.

"Sir Jimmy popped on board for around 15 minutes, saluting as he crossed the gangway – reminding the officer of the day that he was an honorary Royal Marine RSM," said navigator Lt Simon Shaw.

Out in the Middle East, HM Ships **Ramsey** and **Blyth** (crewed by the men and women of Penzance and Pembroke) have left Gulf waters behind for the first time since arriving in theatre last autumn.

It took four days for the duo, Task Force Aintree, to sail from their base in Bahrain, through the Straits of Hormuz, to Oman.

The ships joined craft from the sultanate's navy on a series of exercises, the most exciting being the chance to shoot down (or rather try to shoot down) an aerial target.

Six ships took part in the shoot (HMS Ramsey was the sole RN participant) with the incentive of free beer from the Ramsey's gunnery officer to his crew if they could blast the Banshee drone from the Omani skies with their 30mm gun. Sadly, or perhaps happily for Lt Morgan McDonald, no beers were bought...

Minehunting is not something the Royal Navy of Oman does, so the Aintree ships showed how it is done, spending eight days conducting route survey work.

There was also plenty of time alongside in Muscat, one of the more traditional cities in the Gulf region where minarets and arabesque windows were the norm, not skyscrapers.

The spell in the Omani capital gave the comms and weapons engineering team the chance to clean the aerials and satellite communications equipment – the humid and sandy conditions of the Gulf can take their toll on such hi-tech kit.

And talking of heat... fishery protection ship **HMS Mersey** took a break from prowling the Irish Sea for trawlers to pool her expertise with fire-fighters.

The sailors are semi-experts at fighting fires on ships – and experts at being sailors.

The crews of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service are experts at fighting fires... but bow to the RN when it comes to life at sea.

So 20 civilian firefighters led by Assistant Chief Fire Officer Bill Evans shared their experiences of tackling blazes with Mersey's crew's experiences of dealing with fires in the confined surroundings of a warship.

The day of briefings, talks and brainstorming ended with both groups joining forces to sweep through Mersey tackling a (pretend) blaze, searching for – and rescuing – injured sailors in smoke-filled compartments.

"As sailors we're trained in basic fire-fighting skills," explained XO Lt Jason Varty. "Our priority is to safeguard the crew and the ship.

"The fire-fighters are experts in their field and do this job every day. We certainly learned a lot from them."

This was Mersey's second visit to her affiliated borough in four months and allowed her to host local community groups including affiliated Sea Cadets from TS Ardent, while the sailors were invited by Mayor Richard Hands to Bootle Town Hall.

"We thoroughly enjoyed our stay on Merseyside. The crew had a chance to let their hair down in a region known to be one of the best runs ashore in the Navy after several weeks of intensive operations," Lt Varty added.



Monuments and mountains



ANOTHER month, another 'Stugeron-sponsored' image from the good folk of HMS Southampton in the South Atlantic.

In fairness, it's not always like this (*right*) for the Portsmouth-based Type 42 destroyer – the *Navy News* team just like dramatic images.

The Saint has completed her first spell 'on station' around the Falkland Islands.

As well as calling in at Mare Harbour and Stanley, she has visited some of the more remote settlements such as Port Howard, Goose Green and San Carlos, to chat with locals and pay their respects at the numerous memorials to the 1982 conflict which pepper the Falklands.

At Port Howard on West Falkland, AB Craig 'Buster' Brown climbed Clippy Hill where a monument was erected by the men of HMS Alacrity 25 years ago to the dead of both sides.

Alacrity sank the Argentine supply ship Islas de los Estados, blowing the vessel out of the water with her 4.5in gun.

Among the Type 21 frigate's crew that fateful night was AB Brown's father, who re-visited the monument he helped build two years ago.

Several sailors spent a week on adventurous training while their ship patrolled the islands, beginning with a mountain bike tour of some of the wreck sites around Stanley.

The next morning saw the Saints heading up Mount Harriet, captured by 42 Commando in June 1982; the hill is still scarred by the remains of Argentine positions, with communications equipment, weapon mounts and clothing lying where they were left 25 years ago.

On the top of Harriet the sailors took the opportunity to polish the plaque on the memorial to the Royal Marines.

A visit to the Reclus Hut, a preserved Antarctic expedition hut from the 1950s made the Southampton sailors appreciate the comforts of life aboard their ship.

A real test of everybody's determination – and sense of humour – came during a day-long battlefield tour of Mounts Tumbledown and Longdon, and Wireless Ridge as the Falklands weather conspired against the trip with gale-force winds and hail.

Despite the inclement weather the sailors managed to find yet more former Argentine positions and gained a feeling for how difficult it had been for British troops to storm them a generation ago.

The final full day of the adventurous training was spent clay pigeon shooting, before the team headed back to Southampton after a week which was good fun, challenging and informative at times – and never boring.

The Falklands winter also made life tricky for Saints' football sides – but mercifully not her swimmers.

The ship mustered six teams (from Southampton Sharks to the less conventional Toopy's Turtle Backs) for a swimming gala in the MPA complex.

There were some traditional events – relay, backstroke, butterfly – and some rather more fun, *It's A Knockout*-esque races, including the novelty relay and 'brick fishing'.

Having finished her first patrol period around the Falklands, the destroyer headed for Santos in Brazil – the country's largest port, close to its largest city Sao Paulo – for a brief overhaul, allowing her crew some R&R.

The ship that never stops

DESPITE being the crucible of effort by the Senior Service for almost 20 years, the waters of the Arabian Gulf are surprisingly poorly charted.

So enter the good ship HMS Enterprise to put that right.

There is, says her CO Cdr David Robertson, "a vast volume of work" to be carried out in the Gulf – and although Enterprise will be in the region until next year, she will only have scratched the surface of the surveying work required by the time she returns to Devonport.

Of course, she can't continually be at sea until 2008, so there are some breaks in the programme.

We say 'breaks', but not always 'breaks' in the traditional sense of the word.

One such 'break' from survey work was filled by the mobile FOST team from Devonport, determined to test every member of the ship's company in every manner of crisis and emergency.

There have been more traditional breaks, such as Doha in Qatar – although it proved rather strenuous.

The sailors were hosted by the Qatar Hash House Harriers on their first night, who challenged the Enterprisers to a run (in the desert heat).

The sporting theme continued on the second day of the visit (again in blistering heat) with Doha RFC on the football pitch (the visitors lost).

Back at sea, the ship deployed a new piece of kit: a vertical line array – a buoy which collects information on noise in the water column.

Once the gadget had done its work, it was recovered and the data collected sent back to Blighty for boffins to analyse.

"Enterprise has gatherd a significant amount of data and made a positive impact on navigational safety, though she's by no means finished yet," said Cdr Robertson.

"There's still a huge amount to do – it never stops, and neither do we."

'Like a Bentley...'



BRITAIN'S next-generation destroyer has surpassed expectations on her first outing at sea.

A month around the waters of western Scotland saw HMS Daring sail faster, turn better and stop more quickly than her builders expected – or the RN asked of her.

The Type 45 destroyer's handling was tested extensively in the Firth of Clyde, chiefly off the Isle of Arran, as well as in the more open – and considerably rougher – waters off Benbecula.

A mix of RN and civilian crew took Daring to sea for her maiden voyage.

The destroyer conducted various speed and engine trials, turning and general handling manoeuvres, clocking up 4,500 miles on the counter.

To date, the top speed achieved by the ship is 31½ knots – the Navy wanted 28 from her.

Also tested during the trials were Daring's 4.5in main gun and her 30mm weaponry.

"We have learned a tremendous amount," said Cdr David Shutts, Daring's Senior Naval Officer. "She's not the finished product, but you can see where she's going.

"What has surprised us most is her acceleration – 0 to 26 or 27 knots in little over a minute."

Despite reaching those speeds, Daring used a fraction of the fuel which a Type 42 destroyer or Type 23 frigate would have devoured conducting the same trials.

"This is the best first-of-class warship I have seen in my 44 years in shipbuilding," enthused Vic Emery, head of surface shipbuilding at BAE Systems which has built Daring jointly with the VT Group.

"She moves like a Bentley or a Rolls."

Ian Chambers, head of sea trials for BAE, added: "You get a sense of what she's going to be like while you're building her, but it's only at sea that it really hits you.

"She's absolutely awesome."

Daring is now alongside at Scotstoun on the Clyde to complete fitting out and work on her combat systems before she resumes trials next March/April.

The PAAMS missile system which is the ship's principal weapon is due to be tested in the Mediterranean this winter using a specially-adapted barge, Longbow.

Also fitting out at Scotstoun is Daring's sister Dauntless ahead of her sea trials in late 2008.

Type 45 No.3, HMS Diamond, will be launched further up the Clyde at Govan this autumn.

Picture: BAE Systems

Daring in Superb's sights, page 5; at sea with Daring, centre pages



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Busy Bee's buck starts here

FOR every ton HMS Manchester displaces, USS Harry S Truman displaces 20.

For every sailor aboard the British destroyer, there are 20 crammed into the American carrier.

Yet the latter entrusted her safety to the former as the David and Goliath joined forces in the Atlantic.

And they will do so again before the year is out as the Portsmouth-based warship is attached to the Truman's task force on deployment.

We last caught up with the Busy Bee in New York, her first port of call Stateside.

The destroyer's visit coincided with July 4 celebrations and her waterfront location afforded Manchester a magnificent view of the traditional firework display paid for by department store Macy's.

"The people of New York welcomed the ship's company as if they were their own military," said Lt Phil Bent, Manchester's Deputy Weapons Engineer Officer.

"We had preferential treatment at all the major sites, including free and direct access to the top of the Empire State Building."

When in the States, it is, of course, obligatory to try some of the local sports: cricket and soccer.

Cricket and soccer? Yes, apparently, the sound of leather upon willow could be heard in New Jersey, where the ship's team took on a local side (and lost) while the New York Police Department ladies challenged a Manchester/HMS Illustrious team to a game (also resulting in an American triumph).

The true purpose of the six days at Pier 7 in South Brooklyn was not sport or R&R, however.

US Navy engineers wandered aboard the destroyer to fit vital pieces of kit which would allow Manchester to 'talk' to her American comrades in arms.

"Our visit to New York was a resounding success at every level, reinforcing the extremely positive image the Royal Navy enjoys in the US," said Cdr David. Dominy, Manchester's Commanding Officer.

And so with the sailors suitably rested and the relevant equipment fitted, Manchester left the Big Apple behind and sailed into the Atlantic for an ocean rendezvous with the 100,000-ton American leviathan.

Named for the affable president, USS Harry S Truman (or HST in the wonderful world of American acronyms) heads the potent Carrier Strike Group 10, which currently comprises the surface ships USS Winston S Churchill, Hue City, Oscar Austin, plus the hunter-killer submarine USS Montpelier.

Manchester slipped seamlessly into the American formation, one of three carrier groups formed for Joint Task Exercise 'Bold Step'; HST's older sister Dwight D Eisenhower led a second group and HMS Illustrious was placed in charge of the third force.

The first task set the Busy Bee was defence of an oil rig from enemy attack, which meant the ship's boarding party were at ten minutes' notice to move.

The Americans use a mock-up oil platform (similar to those found in the Gulf) to practise and it is an invaluable asset.

Ranged against the destroyer and the platform were all manner of small raiding craft and larger dubious vessels which either needed parrying or boarding, while Manchester's 815 NAS Lynx 'Sting' (named not after the pop star but the insects on the ship's badge) was continually in the skies scouring the Atlantic for suspicious contacts.

For most Mancunians, however, the highlight was the chance to close in on the Truman as the carrier launched its complement of aircraft.

The Busy Bee was charged with 'plane guard' – sitting about 3,000 yards off the stern of the carrier and being in a position to react to any incidents (ie crashes) which might occur whilst the flat-top goes through its 'deck cycle'.

A deck cycle involves the majority of her aircraft taking off on flying operations before landing back on.

For those members of the ship's company who had not seen this before, it was an ideal camera moment, – especially as Manchester was ideally placed for the jets to fly straight over the top of the destroyer on final approach.

With the first phase of the exercise over, the ships entered Port Everglades in Florida – a 'liberty port' for the US Fleet, so a good time was had by all...

Then it was back to sea for the climax of Bold Step, this time with Manchester returning to a more traditional bosom, protecting HMS Illustrious – and also the tanker USNS Laramie, labelled a 'high value' target by task force planners.

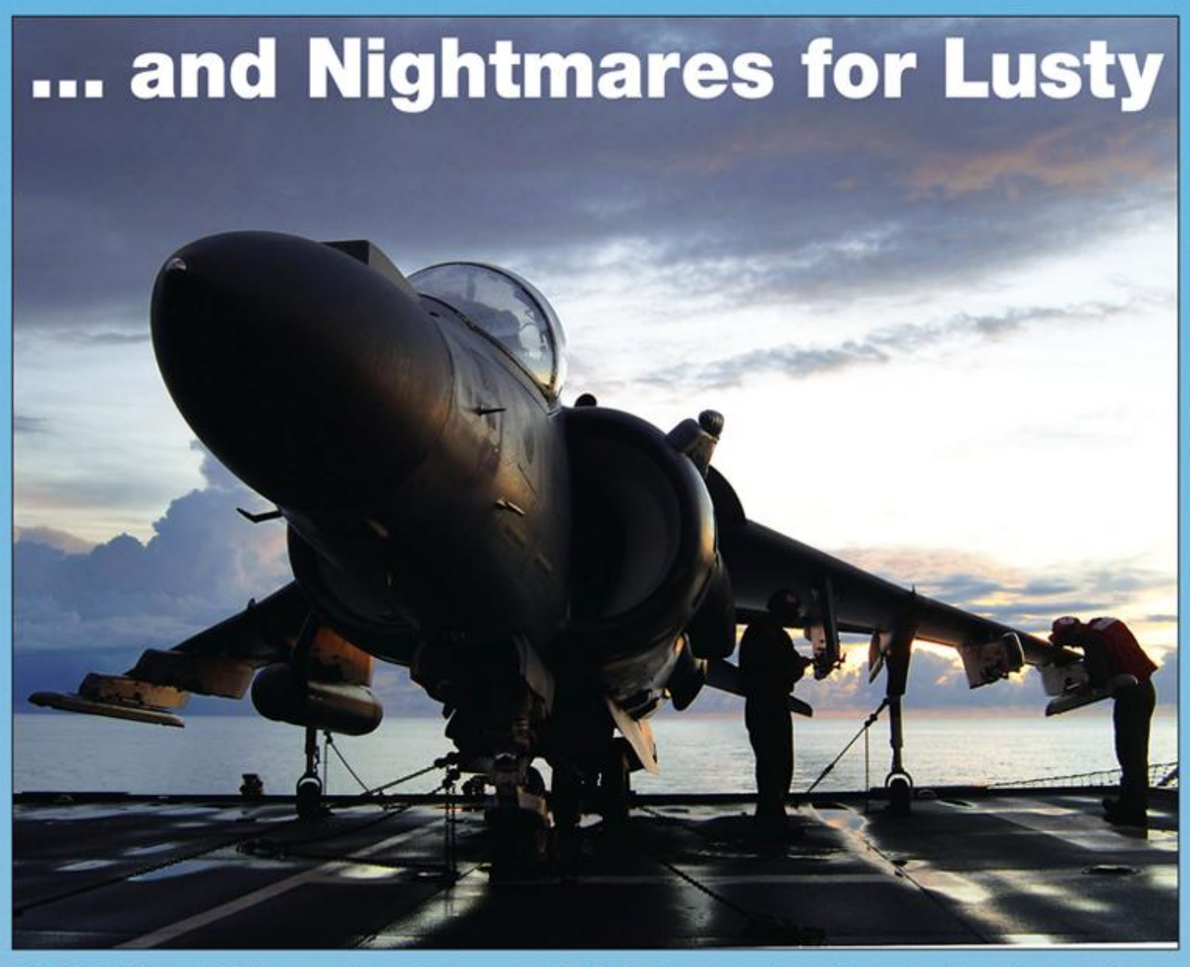
That task successfully achieved, Bold Step drew to a close with most of the ships involved making a bee-line for Norfolk, Virginia, spiritual home of the US Navy and the world's largest naval base.

So the fortnight or so spent in company with the Harry S Truman has proved to be invaluable for Manchester as she gears up to deploy with the HST's task group; the way the US Navy and its task forces operates differs from the way the Senior Service does things.

● *Unmistakable outlines... (Below) HMS Manchester heads for Brooklyn past the skyscrapers at the southern tip of Manhattan and (above right) checks at sunrise on a USMC AV8B Harrier on Illustrious' flight deck*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Darby Allen and PO(Phot) Christine Wood, HMS Illustrious

... and Nightmares for Lusty



AMERICANS and Britons alike have been taking 'bold steps' aboard HMS Illustrious.

For the US Marine Corps AV8B Harriers, this was their first time *en masse* aboard a British carrier.

And for the British sailors the Bold Step war games proved to be an exciting chance to see the Marines' Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft in action.

The British carrier was placed in charge of two cruisers (USS Monterey and San Jacinto), two frigates (USS Nicholas and Simpson), and one destroyer (USS Carney) as she led one of three task groups.

Lusty's force was tested with strike missions, boarding operations, thwarting submarine attacks and warding off attacks from surface foe.

The rather ungainly-looking Osprey particularly impressed the Brits.

"The more we've seen of it and spoken to its crew, the more we can see it has a phenomenal, very exciting future," said Cdr Henry Mitchell, Lusty's Commander Air.

And while the American 'AV8ers' loved their time aboard Illustrious (*see pages 16 and 17*) they were somewhat apprehensive about launching their jump jets; Lusty's flight deck is considerably shorter than the US flat-tops the Corps is used to – hence the 'ski jump' to give the Harriers that extra lift.

"It definitely had an aura about it," said Maj Grant Pennington of Marine Attack Squadron 513, aka the Flying Nightmares.

"It looks like a wall sitting in front of you and is pretty intimidating when you first approach it."

Fortunately, the reality is rather more enjoyable, likened by the Marine fliers to a *Superman* theme park ride (which hurtles thrill seekers along at 100mph to create six seconds of weightlessness apparently).

"We've learned an enormous amount," said Cdre Alan Richards, in charge of the Illustrious Strike Group.

"Not least we've developed bonds of friendship and trust which will undoubtedly endure."

Also vital were tips, suggestions and ideas picked up from the Americans which will be woven into the planning surrounding Britain's next-generation carriers which will enter service next decade.

As for Lusty, she's been back in Pompey briefly through August for summer leave.

This month she departs for the Mediterranean on exercises and she remains on call by NATO as the organisation's current strike carrier should a global crisis arise.



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No jolly – just a Bavarian Surprise

LET'S get one thing straight – Adventurous Training (AT) is not a jolly or an excuse for a knees-up.

It is, however, invaluable in helping build character and providing challenges to take people out of their own 'comfort zone'.

And with some questioning the mettle of Forces personnel – whether as a result of cultural changes, or standard of living – then AT comes into its own, particularly given the opportunities afforded by Exercise Bavaria Surprise.

CPO Errol Brown, who works for DE&S at RAF Wyton, said: "A week's AT is something we are all entitled to under the Personal Functional Standards, should operational commitments allow.

"Exercise Bavaria Surprise provides the Navy with a seven-day structured AT facility open to all Naval personnel who are members of the Sports Lottery.

"Situated in Hindelang in Germany, Tina and Chesty at Haus Schwaben provide the HQ from which all activities, such as mountain biking, climbing, kayaking, klettersteig (fixed-rope climbing routes) and canyoning are organised.

"A mix of RN and civilian instructors implement these challenging activities at a pitch to suit each group.

"The exercise is provided from the beginning of April to the end of October, and a standard package is supplied for the bargain price of £50 per person, including travel, food, accommodation, equipment and activities."

Tailored packages can be arranged, and late bookings accepted.

For more details contact Capt Paul Gellender RM on Paul.Gellender267@mod.uk or a member of the Fleet AT team.

● *Hun in the sun... Great War replica Sopwith and Fokker triplanes and a Sopwith Pup over Culdrose*







Open season in Cornwall

CULDROSE air base's diamond jubilee air day brought record crowds to the Cornish establishment.

In excess of 25,000 people – a good 5,000 up on normal visitor numbers – squeezed into the air station near Helston for the 60th birthday show.

Poor weather has dogged some recent air days, but not the 2007 spectacular which saw home-grown Culdrose 'talent' in the form of Sea Kings and Merlins on show alongside the best of the Fleet Air Arm, foreign military jets, and vintage aircraft.

The record crowd was great for Culdrose but not so great for the local road network, with traffic in some cases backed up to half-way between Helston and Redruth.

Air station personnel handed out bottled water to tourists stuck in the traffic while staff on the gate first cut the admission fee, then waived it entirely as the day drew on.

A proverbial stone's throw from Culdrose, 771 Naval Air Squadron was invited to display at Land's End visitor centre during an air-sea rescue day organised by the RNLI.

Sadly – and reinforcing the importance of the Ace of Spades – the squadron was two hours late appearing at the demonstration after its helicopters were called upon in a search for two missing divers in Whitsand Bay.

The bodies of teacher Kaye Moss and friend David White, both from Gloucestershire, were eventually found inside the wreck of HMS Scylla, sunk as an artificial reef off the Cornish coast.

Once that mission was called off, Sea King XV670 headed for the westernmost tip of the mainland for two demonstrations.

First a 'casualty' had to be lifted from a cliff top with the help of a Coastguard search and rescue team.

Then 'casualties' had to be hauled from the sea with the help of Sennen Cove lifeboat.

Both 'rescues' complete, the SAR helicopter set down at Land's End, where the crew were promptly engulfed by tourists.

Slightly less dramatic was HMS Raleigh's open day, where despite the influx of 2,500 people keen to see what goes on behind the fence of the Torpoint establishment, daily business continued as normal.

And perhaps that was the attraction.

The public watched new entry trainees being given their first taste of RN life courtesy of the assault course and drill on the parade ground.

The Submarine School offered an insight into the art of identifying contacts using sonar and an overview of the history of the Silent Service through its heritage area.

Coaches ferried people to the fire-fighting and RAS simulators, while traditional entertainment was provided by the Band of HM Royal Marines Plymouth's Corps of Drums.

"The fact that this is a real base with the chance to talk to people who are actually in training is a great opportunity for anyone who is thinking about joining up to see what the Navy has to offer," said holidaymakers Mary and Mel Sitch from Newbury.

Visitors travelled from as far away as London and Sheffield to sample Raleigh and left, hopefully, with "a real appreciation of the range of top-class training we provide for all ranks," said Cdre John Keegan, Raleigh's CO.



● *A Sea King from 771 NAS demonstrates rescue techniques at Land's End* Picture: Howard Heeley

Like father, like son

A SHOOTING trophy in memory of a Royal Marines marksman has been won by a team in which his son was a member.

The Pete Bloom Trophy, awarded to the RN or RM team whose ten firers achieve the highest gallery score, was won by the Royals.

And Pete Bloom's widow was able to present the trophy to her son.

Pete shot for and coached the RM team, and had shot for the GB Service Rifle team.

The competition was part of the Tri-Service Queen's Medal Final for Combat Shooting, the last event in the Royal Navy's Central Skill-at-Arms Meeting, held at Bisley.

The RN contest saw each Command team of 12 competing for 13 trophies, while individuals had the chance to shoot for 19 prizes – the top one being the Queen's Medal.

The General's Cup was won by the Royal Marines, followed by Portsmouth, Plymouth and Naval Air Command.

The Air Arm Cup saw the Royal Navy beat the Royal Marines, while the Queen's Medal went to C/Sgt Gibbett RM.

For more details on the RNRM Rifle Association, see the website www.RNRMRA.org or email Lt Dickie Byrd at corporate@RNRMRA.org

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Captain flags up church link



● *Flag staff – pictured on board Warrior (from left): Jean Warren, Ken Jones, the Captain of Warrior, Rev Gordon Warren and Lt Vicky Gilfore*

ST ANNE'S Church in Limehouse has worn the White Ensign with pride since 1731 – long before it became the exclusive symbol of the Royal Navy in the 1860s.

The Hawksmoor church has special Parliamentary permission to continue to fly the flag – a situation much appreciated by the rector, Rev Gordon Warren, a former Naval artificer.

The Navy helped ensure the White Ensign was in pristine condition by replacing it in 2005, but now the church has two more White Ensigns to fly, thanks to another Naval link.

The Captain of HMS Warrior 1860, Ken Jones, lived in the parish of St Anne's for 21 years, was head choir boy at the church and got married there in 1968.

Warrior herself has a local connection, having been built by the Thames Ironworks and Shipbuilding Company in nearby Blackwall.

So it made good sense for the ship, a star attraction of the Historic Dockyard collection in Portsmouth, to present two flags to the church.

They will fly from the top of the 200ft tower at St Anne's – now dwarfed by the skyscrapers of Docklands, but once a sea mark for ships entering the Pool of London.

Citizens on patrol

THE 'safety police' of Portsmouth Harbour are looking for more volunteers – and cash – to ensure the service's continued success.

The Volunteer Harbour Patrol, or VHP, was set up in the spring of 2004 to make the waters of Portsmouth Harbour safer by using trained volunteers, all experienced mariners, to offer friendly advice to all who use the waters during the summer.

And that's a lot of people.

"Look around the harbour. It's marina, marina, marina – there are more than 5,000 yachts and boats moored here," said Cdr Kendall Carter, Queen's Harbour Master, in charge of the VHP.

"We're the second busiest port in the UK – this summer has been absolutely manic, especially since the beginning of August and Cowes week."

From late April/early May until the end of October/early November, the VHP boats and jet skis are on the water every weekend, every bank holiday, and some of the busier weekdays when the volunteers can spare the time.

The 40 or so volunteers are drawn from all walks of life: ex-RN, ex-Army, police force, even a postman (yes, called Pat), who give up on average two days every month to keep the harbour safe.

Personal water craft – or jetskis as most people know them – were in the headlines a few years back, but rarely today, thanks to two VHP jetskis and dedicated areas for these fast craft (they can reach speeds in excess of 60mph) off Eastney and Lee-on-the-Solent.

Most transgressions are down to ignorance – not knowing the harbour, not knowing the rules, such as failing to use the dedicated channel for boats under 20m rather than the main channel.used by warships, ferries and commercial shipping.

The harbour entrance is, not surprisingly, the choke point.

At peak times in high summer there could be 100 craft an hour moving in and out of Portsmouth.

And, to be fair, most sailors are law-abiding. They wave merrily to the patrol craft. But there is one big bugbear for the VHP team.

"You regularly see children riding in RIBs without life jackets or buoyancy aids – you can very easily get 'bumped' off a RIB," said former CPO Ken Bichard, vice chairman of the VHP.

"You can pick up an aid for perhaps £30."

The VHP is not a police force – there are MOD police launches and Hampshire Constabulary's boats to tackle criminal activity. It is limited to educating and advising harbour users on safety issues.

Interestingly, there's no law to make you wear a life jacket on your own boat, nor do you need a 'driver's licence' to skipper a yacht.

Nor is the patrol the AA of the high seas, although much of the team's time is spent towing home broken-down vessels (invariably through lack of fuel).

"Some people see the sea as the last bastion of freedom and don't like being told what to do, but most people accept that we're here to help and give us a friendly wave," said Mr Bichard.

Rules dictate the patrol cannot charge for its service. Aside from the goodwill of the volunteers, it relies on sponsors and donations to maintain its four boats and two jet skis.

"Our jetskis have done about 40 times more miles and time in the water than an average jetski simply because they're on patrol all summer – and when it comes to servicing anything connected with a boat costs far more than a car for example," explained Cdr Carter.

To date, the generosity of sponsors such as Serco, VT and Raymarine have kept the boats in the water, but more support – and volunteers – are needed to ensure the service continues.

"No other port runs anything on the scale of the VHP and it's crucial to the safe running of Portsmouth Harbour in the summer," Cdr Carter added.

More details are available from the patrol's website at www.vhpportsmouth.com or by ringing 023 9272 3124.

A-Z of VHP

- 'Portsmouth Harbour' officially covers around 50 square miles of water, stretching to Eastney, Cowes and Sandown Bay on the Isle of Wight
- Portsmouth is the second busiest harbour in the UK, surpassed only by Dover – with 75,000 'movements' each year
- Ninety-nine per cent of commercial shipping bound for Southampton sails through the eastern Solent – and through QHM's domain
- The Volunteer Harbour Patrol two jetskis and four small boats, including two catamarans. On a day's patrol, the catamarans will guzzle around £100 fuel



● *The boats and jet skis of the Volunteer Harbour Patrol churn the waters of Portsmouth Harbour*
Picture: LA(Phot) Chris Wenham, FRPU Whale Island



● *Work in progress on the Armed Forces Memorial in Staffordshire, which will be officially dedicated on October 12*

Forces memorial tickets available

TICKETS are available for the dedication of the Armed Forces Memorial in Staffordshire – but organisers are warning that numbers are limited.

The Memorial, at the National Arboretum in Alrewas, will list some 15,500 names of members of the UK Armed Forces, regular and reserves, killed on duty or as a result of terrorism since World War 2.

This includes members of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary and the Merchant Navy who have died while serving in conflict zones.

It is intended that the memorial will attain national significance, and a focus for remembrance to provide recognition and thanks for those who have given their lives.

Uniquely, it will also give prominence to the civilian sacrifice that accompanies military losses, and will be a place where families and friends can go to feel a connection with their loved ones, according to an MOD spokesman.

The Memorial will be dedicated on Friday October 12, and 4,000 tickets have been allocated for friends and families of those killed on duty since 1948, to be divided between the decades.

There will be around 500 tickets for each decade, with a maximum of two tickets per family, and 160 for Service and ex-Service personnel who served alongside those named on the walls.

Application forms are available online from the Armed Forces Memorial website at www.forcesmemorial.org

As tickets are limited, and allocated on a first-come, first-served basis, organisers have advised families, colleagues and friends to apply early if you would like to attend.

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● *A Lynx from 815 Naval Air Squadron picks up an Army patrol in South Armagh*
Picture: K A Boyd

815 – Banner waving

AFTER 38 years, Operation Banner came to an end in Northern Ireland at midnight on July 31, and the last helicopters from 815 Naval Air Squadron headed home to RNAS Yeovilton saying goodbye to the unit's deployment to the Province.



● *A Lynx from 815 NAS' Operational Readiness Unit on the pad at Bessbrook Mill. During the height of the troubles in the 1980s Bessbrook became the busiest heliport in Europe due to the large number of flights arriving and departing from the former linen mill*



● *The grey Naval Lynx also conducted a number of school visits under the auspices of DNR during the deployment*



● *The hand-drawn crest in Bessbrook Mill*

ALTHOUGH you would think from the media reports that only the Army had been in Northern Ireland through the 38-year history of Operation Banner, the Navy too, and its sailors, airmen and Royal Marines, were caught up in that long-running task of supporting the police and civil authorities.

And while the Army's soldiers were shown departing from Northern Ireland on the last day, it was a Naval Lynx helicopter that took to the skies in a final farewell to one of the more significant locations in the Province's troubled past.

For the last year people and helicopters of 815 Naval Air Squadron have been supporting operations from RAF Aldergrove as the RAF and Army helicopters moved on to other operational commitments.

The last four months of Banner saw that tasking ramp up, with the Fleet Air Arm offering 24-hour, seven-day-a-week support to the troops and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) from South Armagh.

January saw a tough ten-week course set up back in Yeovilton to provide the specialist training for the operational crews to manage their duties in Northern ireland.

Among the demands put on the Lynx' crews were the ability to bring the aircraft down to ground level using night-vision goggles to an accuracy of a few metres.

At the end of the course, three Lynx Mk 3 helicopters and four crews from 815's Operational Readiness Unit headed off to their new base at Aldergrove on March 20.

Another ten days brought on-the-ground training from the Naval Flying Standards team, ensuring that the Navy's grey Lynxes could use their new skills adeptly in theatre.

On April 1 the last Army Air Corps helicopter left Bessbrook Mill and the Royal Navy airmen and Lynx, under the command of Lt Cdr Andy Hurry, settled into their new home.

"Bessbrook Mill did not appear to feature in any of the local hotel guides," commented Lt Cdr Hurry wryly, "and all the aircrew and maintainers who spent time in the Mill endured the joys of living in a building with no windows.

"Hence no natural light and what little serviceable lighting there was making it feel more like a prison than somewhere to base a military force."

However as the working schedule saw the Fleet Air Arm crews working 48 hours on, 48 hours off for the next 12 weeks until the Mill's military life ended, their base became an important focus for the Navy teams.

"When we took over from the Army they had made us a little hammock to make us feel at home," said Lt Cdr Hurry.

"In order to make it a more nautical establishment, we drew a number of portholes, a nautical relief on the wall and our own squadron crest – all to make it more homely."

The three operational crews in the Province ran a routine of two weeks in theatre, one week on mainland, keeping a balance of drills, flying checks and time at home.

The fourth crew, made up of the detachment commander and another observer, were kept busy running the overall operation, and providing support to ships and submarines working up in the Clyde exercise areas.

Each 48-hour duty saw the Naval fliers working with the local troops and police force during patrols and in setting up vehicle check points.

The helicopters were also at 15-minutes notice to move in the event of life-threatening situations such as road traffic accidents.

Bessbrook Mill ceased its military role on June 25 after the 815 unit had spent 12 weeks on site, and the aircraft moved on to Aldergrove for the final six weeks of the Banner operation.

At its peak in the 1980s the Mill saw over 600 flights a week in and out by helicopters from the Royal Navy, Royal Air Force and Army – an average of one every eight minutes during daylight hours and moving up to 15,000 passengers a month.

This small village in Northern Ireland was, for a spell, the busiest heliport in Europe due to the traffic of military rotorcraft shifting back and forth.

The last aircraft to leave this landmark of military helicopters was a Royal Navy Lynx Mk 3, flown by Lt Marty Craven, Lt Rae McDermott Evans and Lt Mat Askham.

"The Royal Navy and Royal Marines were, of course, no strangers to operating in the Support Helicopter role in Northern Ireland," said Lt Cdr Hurry, "with the Wessex of 707 and 845 NAS and later Sea Kings from 707 and 846 NAS serving in the Province for extended periods between 1977 and 2002.

"RM Commando Sioux, Scout and Gazelle also flew in the light liaison and reconnaissance role between 1970 and 1980, and in 1980-81 a Lynx Mk2 from HMS Ambuscade, painted in grey-green camouflage, carried out coastal patrols looking for gun runners."

The officer added: "Being in the Province has brought some surprises, and the most notable one was the discovery that 815 was re-formed in 1947 at Eglinton airfield, Londonderry, which was then HMS Gannet.

"The squadron remained there until 1963 – longer than we have currently been at Yeovilton."

Cdr Alun Jones, commanding officer of 815 NAS, joined member of the Operational Readiness Unit to see their squadron's former home at Eglinton in June, and to mark the publication of a new book on the history of Naval aviation in Northern Ireland (see below).

On August 2 the last 815 NAS Lynx returned to its home in Yeovilton drawing a line under Operation Banner.

The four months had involved 11 mission-ready aircrew plus six holdovers, who acted as rear crew, and some 40 maintainers took part in the tours of duty.

Lt Cdr Hurry concluded: "All tasking and much more had been achieved.

"Most notably the fact that the grey Lynx, along with its air and ground crew, could at short order assess, adapt and re-train for a different type of mission.

"815 Squadron – in the finest tradition of the Fleet Air Arm – continues to adapt to provide the highest standards of aviation wherever they are asked to operate, whether on land or sea."

A garrison of up to 5,000 Service personnel remain permanently stationed in Northern Ireland ready for deployment around the world. Under the newly-formed Operation Helvetic their only role in the Province's running is in the case of extreme public disorder – a duty that the Forces are always ready to perform in mainland Britain at need.

■ For a full history of the Fleet Air Arm in Northern Ireland, see Guy Warner's *Flying from Derry: Eglinton and Naval Aviation in Northern Ireland*, available from Ernie Cromie on 0797 450 2319 or ernie@airni.freeserve.co.uk.

Old enemies, new friends

In the fourth in his series for *Navy News*, Royal Naval Museum Director and leading naval historian Dr Colin White looks at a key element in the Royal Navy's approach to waging war – compassion for its foe.

IN THE autumn of 1783, the former commander-in-chief of the French naval forces in the Indian Ocean, Count Pierre-André de Suffren, called in at the Cape of Good Hope with a small French squadron.

He had just ended a remarkable two-year campaign, in which he and his comrades had fought a series of major fleet actions against the English, under Admiral Sir Edward Hughes. Now peace had been declared and he was on his way home to France.

A few days after Suffren arrived at the Cape, an English squadron sailed into the bay, also on its way home. It could have been a very awkward moment. Six English captains had been killed during the campaign just ended, and the squadron was commanded by Cdre Richard King whose ship, HMS Exeter, had been badly mauled in one of the most fiercely-contested battles.

Instead, as soon as he heard that Suffren was at the Cape, King went to call on him, accompanied by all the captains of the squadron. They wanted to pay public tribute to an opponent whom they had come to admire for his courage and tactical ability.

Suffren was very moved by their gesture. "Among the tributes that have most flattered me," he wrote, "none has given me more pleasure than the esteem and consideration testified by the English."

Esteem and consideration. I was reminded of those words back in May of this year, when I was privileged to take part in a moving ceremony on board the German fleet auxiliary Berlin.

She was making a special visit to Portsmouth to pick up an unusual cargo – the bell of a WW1 German battleship, SMS Oldenberg. Following the war it had found its way into the Royal Naval Museum, but now the Germans were launching a new Oldenberg and they had asked if the bell could be returned.

The museum trustees agreed and I was formally handing it over to the German Navy.

Standing beside me as the national anthems were played was the man who initiated the transfer, WW2 veteran Cdr Eddie Grenfell.

Better-known for his long fight to get official recognition for those who took part in the Atlantic Convoys, Cdr Grenfell has also worked tirelessly for reconciliation between former foes.

Like so many veterans, he understands the special bond that exists between fighting men, whatever their nationality.

Of course, this sort of bond exists in the other services as well. One thinks, for example, of that great man Simon Weston, the veteran of the Sir Galahad disaster during the Falklands War in 1982.

He has made a point of tracking down Carlos Cachón, the Argentine pilot who dropped the bomb that killed his comrades and scarred him for life. The two men have made peace with each other and Cachón has even met Simon's family.

All the same, the bond between sailors has an extra dimension. For, whatever their nationality, they have one important thing in common. They are all at the mercy of the sea.

And that has created a special phenomenon – the 'brotherhood of the sea'.

Next month we will be celebrating the anniversary of the Battle of Trafalgar – and the 'brotherhood of the sea' is an important part of that story too.

After the battle, the opposing fleets were hit by a fearsome storm. Immediately, national differences were forgotten and British, French and Spanish sailors worked alongside each other to save lives.

And Vice Admiral Cuthbert Collingwood, who had taken over command when Nelson died, sent a message to the Governor of Cadiz. He offered to land the Spanish wounded so that they could be looked after properly in hospitals ashore.

This humane gesture so impressed the governor that he offered to take the British wounded as well and look after them.

Two years ago, at the Trafalgar 200 Fleet Review, that inspiring story formed the climax of the stunning *son et lumière* show, which ended a truly memorable day.

At the finish, all the ships in the great international fleet at Spithead were suddenly lit up as a symbol of the 'brotherhood of the sea'.

Some of the more cynical commentators wrote this off as 'political correctness'.

They said that we should have ended the show with stirring patriotic songs and lots of triumphant flag-waving.

But it was noticeable that none of those who made this ill-informed criticism were sailors!

And we can be sure that Nelson himself would have approved of that more thoughtful ending. For it was entirely in tune with the spirit that he encouraged in his men.

Early in the morning of October 21 1805, as the Victory was sailing into battle, he wrote a famous prayer in his diary. In it, he asked God, "may humanity after Victory be the predominant feature in the British Fleet."

That phrase is so well-known that some people make the mistake of thinking that 'humanity after victory' is a particularly Nelsonian concept.

In fact, as so often, Nelson was simply giving memorable expression to a golden thread that runs through the whole of naval history.

Nelson's prayer for humanity; the tireless reconciliation work of Eddie Grenfell; and the "esteem and consideration" shown by those British captains to their former foe, Pierre-André de Suffren.

All these are elements of the same tradition.

They an essential part of the Royal Navy's way of waging war.



● *Humanity after victory... survivors of the Bismarck are plucked from the Atlantic in May 1941 by HMS Dorsetshire*



Submarine's loss recalled

ILL-FATED submarine HMS M2 will be remembered this autumn with a series of events marking the 75th anniversary of her loss.

The undersea leviathan was unique in the annals of the Silent Service: a seaplane-carrying submersible as the RN dabbled with different variants of submarines between the wars.

M2 was originally built, like her sister M1, with a 12in gun; Washington Treaty limitations and the loss of M1 in the Channel caused the Admiralty to re-design the boat, replacing the gun with a small hangar to carry a seaplane.

It is the seaplane which caused M2's downfall in January 1932 during exercises in Lyme Bay.

Other vessels watched M2 dive, but the submarine never reappeared. Eight days later, divers found the wreck, with the hangar doors open.

The bodies of two crew, Leslie Gregory and Albert Jacobs, were recovered; 58 other men remain entombed in the wreck.

To mark the loss, the Nautical Archaeology Society, Silent Service and Fleet Air Arm are all planning events.

"For years, the M2 has been an iconic dive – but we should never forget that the crew are still inside the boat. That means we should treat her with respect," explained Jane Maddocks, wreck protection officer for the British Sub-Aqua Club.

"I know that this boat is special and that submariners who dive her still feel an affinity with those inside the hull."

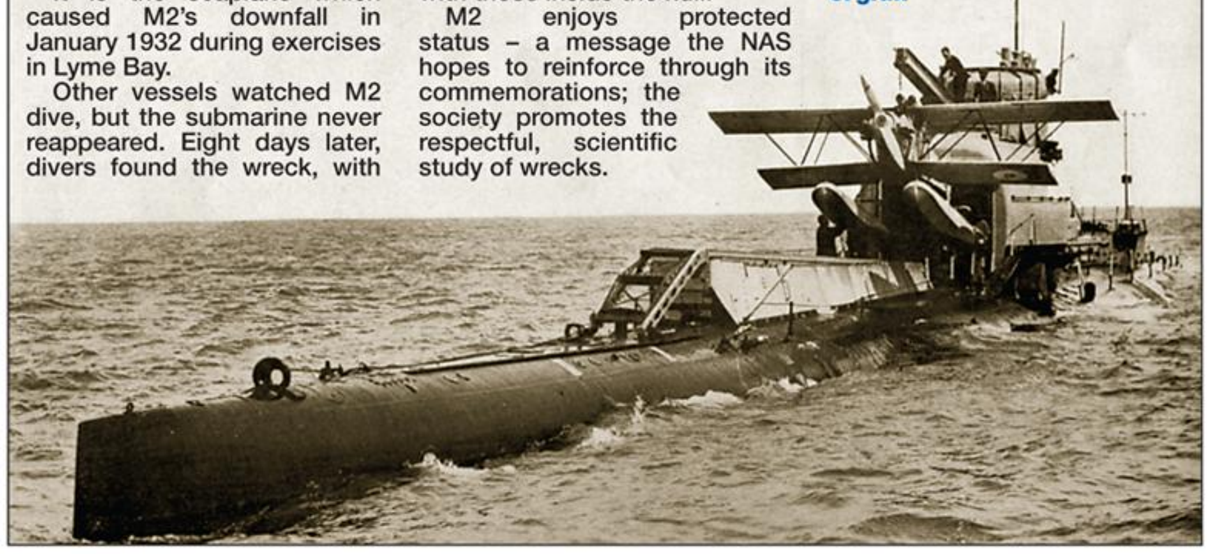
M2 enjoys protected status – a message the NAS hopes to reinforce through its commemorations; the society promotes the respectful, scientific study of wrecks.

It plans three days of dives on M2 with a mix of Service and civilian divers returning to the submarine to lay a White Ensign.

On November 22 there will be a talk on the boat and her aircraft at the Fleet Air Arm Museum in Yeovilton followed by an exhibition in January, and St Andrew's Church on Portland will host a comme morative service on December 9.

The society will also produce a Christmas card based on one sent 75 years ago by HMS M2 crew member Jack Lewis.

More details are available from **www.nasportsmouth.org.uk**



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SHIPS OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.622

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Falkland Islands..... 1982
Kuwait 1991

Facts and figures

Class: Landing Ship (Logistic)
Pennant Number: L3004
Builder: Hawthorn Leslie, Hebburn-on-Tyne
Laid down: October 1965 – originally for service with the Ministry of Transport
Launched: July 20 1966
Commissioned: May 18 1967
Lloyds Classification: +100 A1 +LMC Class 1 Ro-Ro passenger
Displacement: 6,700 tonnes
GRT: 7,729 tonnes
Deadweight: 2,404 tonnes
Length: 137.5 metres
Breadth: 17.7 metres
Draught: 4 metres
Speed: 17 knots
Propulsion: Two Stork Wartsila SW280 V12 diesels
Designed power: 7,096 kw
Armament: Two 20mm GAMBO, eight general purpose machine guns, two Mk44 mini-guns
Landing platforms: Aft: Sea King, Lynx, Merlin; Forward: Chinook, Sea King, Lynx

OF THE Knights of the Round Table which have been the backbone of amphibious operations by this land since the mid-1960s, only one great warrior is still in service.

And although amphibious warfare is now past for RFA Sir Bedivere with the arrival of the Bay class, she still has one final, vital duty to perform.

Since April 1 the venerable landing ship (logistic) has been the 'mother ship' to the Iraqi Navy in the northern Arabian Gulf, serving as the base for training Iraq's marines and sailors in the arts of seamanship and defence of sovereign waters and the oil platforms which are crucial to the country's economic success.

Each Sunday, around 50 Iraqi Navy personnel arrive aboard the ship, plus six mentors from the RN-led Naval Transition Team at Umm Qasr.

The ship's vehicle deck is home to three FABs – Fast Aluminium Boats – which are launched and recovered daily by the RFA's crew, while the Iraqis prowl around in them in the northern Gulf.

Once recovered, the FABs need refuelling – a demanding task as temperatures in Sir Bedivere's vehicle deck nudge 40°C (considerably cooler, however, than the 55°C in the ship's engine room).

The week is devoured by patrols around the two oil terminals and overseeing the daily boarding exercises which the Iraqi Marines conduct on the many tankers waiting to fill their holds.

The ship and the trainee Iraqis also have to contend with scores of smaller vessels: typically in a six-mile radius of the auxiliary you'll find in excess of 100 other craft.

And just to add to the 'fun', there's normally at least one VIP calling in every week: "an admiral or two, a few commodores and the odd major-general to keep us on our toes," says CO Capt Duncan Lamb.

The Iraqis disembark each Friday, giving the RFA chaps and chapesses two days to themselves – although there's little chance for a breather with dhows trying to go where they shouldn't or oil spills to contend with.

And then, come Sunday, a fresh batch of Iraqis and mentors arrive...

It's a routine which will continue until the ship returns to Britain in February to pay off, before being put on the disposal list the following month.

That will bring to an end 41 years of service for her country.

Sir Bedivere – named for King Arthur's first and most trusted knight – began life on the Tyne in the mid-1960s and entered service with the Army initially, until she was transferred to the RFA in 1970.

All the knights were designed to support the second wave of an amphibious operation, ferry troops and kit ashore via landing craft or using Mexeflote rafts, or by simply opening her bow door and disgorging her cargo on to a beach directly.

Today's Sir Bedivere is 12 metres (39ft) longer than the one which took shape at Hawthorn Leslie four decades ago.

The ship spent three years out of action in the mid-90s undergoing an overhaul which saw her extended, her bridge raised and her flight deck lowered, among other alterations.

● *The last patrol... RFA Sir Bedivere on her final deployment in the northern Arabian Gulf*

Picture: LA(Phot) Jannine Hartmann, FRPU Whale Island



Sir Bedivere earned her battle honours in the first Gulf War in 1991 and, more notably, in the Falklands nine years earlier.

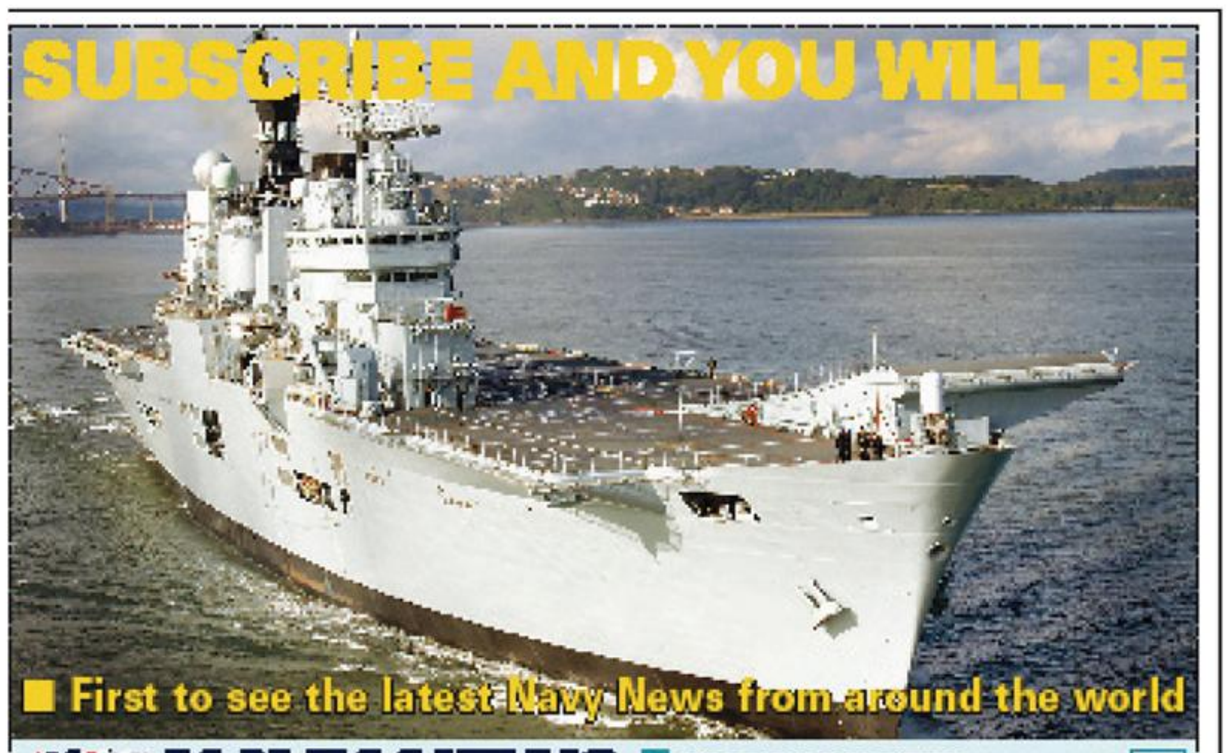
The ship had been in Vancouver but hot-footed it back to Marchwood, where she took on stores and personnel in a single day, before sailing to reach the Falklands in time for the main assault at San Carlos on May 21 1982.

She was glanced by a bomb from an Argentine jet three days later; it passed through her yard arm, bounced into the sea and exploded.

A generation on, Sir Bedivere was at the heart of operations off Sierra Leone when Britain intervened to prevent civil war.

And as for her current 'mother ship' role in the Gulf, well, that's something she's an old hand at.

During the second Gulf War the auxiliary served as the command ship for British and American minehunting forces dealing with underwater explosives which Saddam Hussein had tried to scatter in the northern Gulf and approaches to Umm Qasr.



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HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No.41

N Rath RNR, R J Knowlton RN, G F P Abbott RNR – AM

SEPTEMBER 14 was a foggy morning in the Solent, but Flt Cdr Edward Albert de Lossy de Ville shrugged off the bad weather, predicting that the sea mist would clear as he left Southampton Water in his Sopwith Baby seaplane.

Five minutes later he was over Horsea Island and the fog had not cleared – but in 1917, Horsea Island was littered with wooden aerial masts, including three towering masts which at 446ft dominated the Portsmouth skyline.

Down on the ground the men at the wireless telegraphy station heard the sound of the plane circling above; they glanced up through the murk to look at the three tall masts and their web of supporting steel-wire stays which promised disaster for aircraft.

The engine noise ended abruptly with a loud crash and the men on the ground rushed away from the bases of the masts, fearing that the crashed plane would plummet earthwards and explode.

It didn't. Instead, Able Seaman Nicholas Rath RNR began to climb, laboriously hauling himself up the lattice of 6ft X-frames that stacked up to make the tower's height.

As Rath climbed skywards the mist cleared briefly to show a dark shape suspended near the top of the mast.

The Sopwith Baby had smashed face-first into the wooden frame, missing the fine metal wires. It was held by its shattered propeller in tenuous suspension like a scenario in a Harold Lloyd film.

Ordinary Seaman Richard Knowlton grabbed some riggers' rope and with Deckhand George Faucett Pitts Abbott RNR began to scale the tower in Rath's wake.

The men on the ground started to haul the bosun's chair up towards the stricken plane suspended delicately in the framework above their heads.

Rath, who later admitted that he had never climbed higher than 73ft on the mast, reached the crash site some 360ft above Horsea Island.

He could see de Ville sprawled unconscious over the front of a wing where he had been thrown in the collision.

De Ville had been hurled from the cockpit on impact, hitting the upper wing of the biplane then falling senseless to the wing beneath.

With Knowlton and Abbott in the mast above him, Rath looked out at the perilous platform of the plane's body.

Inch by tortuous inch the sailor edged forward, tightly clutching the rope, anchored by the two men in the rigging above him.

He tied the rope around the pilot and the three dragged de Ville from the plane, then placed him in the bosun's chair which had finally completed its long slow journey up the side of the tower.

Still unconscious the airman was strapped into the seat and he was winched slowly down to the men below, where he was carried to one of the huts and treated.

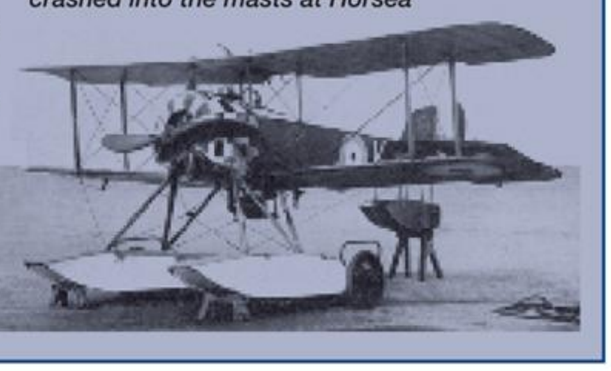
Once back in the sickbay at Calshot, de Ville reported the bravery of the three men to his commanding officer who recommended the sailors for an award.

All three men received the Albert Medal for their bravery, but only Rath – one of the ground staff who was utterly unused to scaling the vast heights of the aerial masts – received the Albert Medal in gold.

Although it may seem that de Ville was reckless in his flying that day – and he had pranged several aircraft previously in his career – he was an experienced and knowledgable pilot who flew in an era when accidents on landing and engine failures were a day-to-day hazard.

And as for the mast, it became known as 'Ville's mast', and bore as a memorial for the next year a jaunty angle in its upper reaches.

● *A Sopwith Baby similar to the one which crashed into the masts at Horsea*



Navy News Calendar 2008

Picture: LA(Phot) Emma Somerfield

ASSAULT - The Royal Navy Storms Ashore is the theme of the 2008 Navy News Calendar.

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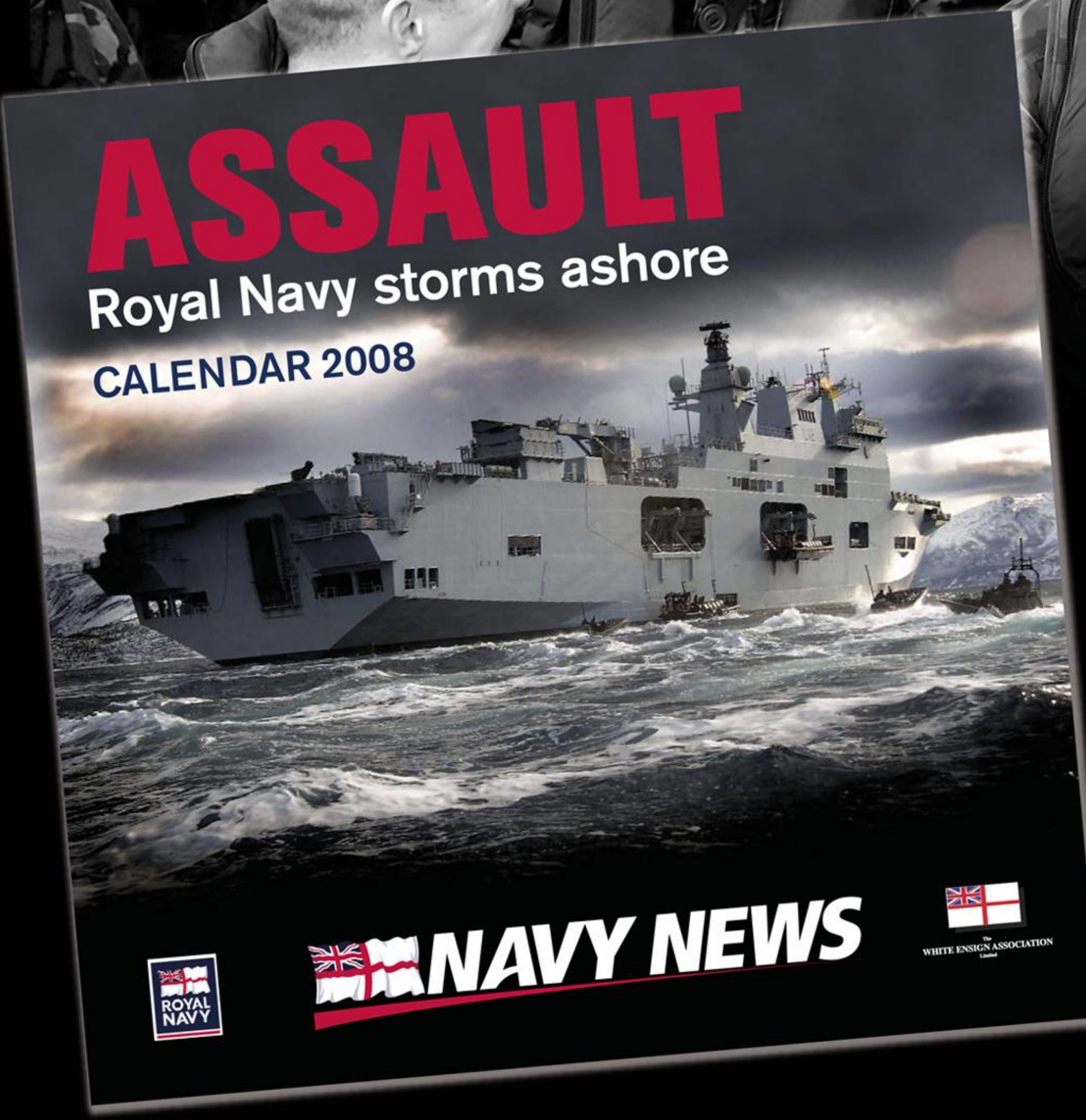
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TIME FOR

Our carriers may be small. Our Fleet might pale by comparison. But there's much the Americans can learn from – and admire – aboard Britain's strike flagship HMS Illustrious. US journalist Vago Muradian offers a unique perspective of life aboard Lusty during Anglo-American exercises off the Eastern Seaboard.



● *Illustrious leads USS Harry S Truman and USS Dwight D Eisenhower during the exercise and (below) a closer look at the awesome Truman and Eisenhower, their flight deck crammed with jets*

Pictures: LA(Phot) Darby Allen, PO(Phot) Christine Wood, HMS Illustrious and US Marine Corps/US Navy

WHAT'S the definition of heaven if you're a Marine Harrier pilot? Why, spending two weeks on one of Britain's aircraft carriers, of course.

"What's not to like? The flying's awesome, the food and quarters are great, and you can get a drink at the end of the day," said Maj Stephan 'Poppy' Bradicich, the executive officer of Marine Attack Squadron 542 who helped plan the unprecedented embarkation of 16 Harriers and 200 Marines aboard HMS Illustrious, known as Lusty to its crew.

The largest-ever embark of Marine personnel and aircraft aboard a foreign warship from July 15-31 was part of Joint Task Force Exercise Operation Bold Step 07-02 that included the Harry S Truman and Dwight D Eisenhower strike groups, to prepare Truman for its upcoming deployment.

The accommodations and food drew high marks from the Marines. They enjoyed everything from curry night to such traditional Royal Navy dishes as "hammy eggy cheesy" — toast layered with shredded ham, an egg and covered with melted cheese — and kippered herrings along with eggs, bacon and beans for breakfast, or haggis and bashed neeps — mashed turnips — for dinner. The ship even features "Chips at Six" — fresh French fries served in the bar before dinner.

Other pluses? A roomy, teak quarterdeck aft to take a quiet break or take in a sunset, beautifully varnished wooden ladders and generous carpeting — which are stripped when the ship goes into battle — and Internet connectivity that works every time.

But one of the most satisfying things is that the ship is a strike carrier where Harriers, not helicopters, are the priority.

"This is the Royal Navy's A team, and they live and breathe strike," said Col Eric 'Beans' Van Camp, the commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 14, who also commanded the US air group aboard Illustrious. "On a gator (*amphibious assault ship – Ed*), the Harriers are secondary to the amphibious and helicopter mission."



Then there is the pièce de resistance, the 20-foot-long blond oak bar that is the centerpiece of a spacious lounge, part of the wardroom annex where off-duty officers can draw a pint, dram, cocktail, coffee or tea and reflect on the day and prepare for tomorrow.

"Everyone's working really hard, but it's also OK to relax afterward with a beer, within the rules we live by," Van Camp said. "The challenge is maintaining that balance of mission and safety."

If you're flying the next day, you're not drinking, nor are you staying up late, Bradicich said as he sipped a soft drink.

"It's a great tool that we don't have," Bradicich said. "On our ships, there's no place where you can really unwind, get to know your shipmates on a personal level, and solve disagreements. Our view is that if you have free time, you should be doing something other than hanging around. Here, everyone works just as hard, but they also know how to unwind. It's a huge philosophical difference."

That philosophical difference manifests in the relaxed atmosphere aboard the ship, including the relationship between officers and ratings — British for enlisted personnel.

Case in point? Expect a cheery "good morning" as you make your way down the passage or an offer for help if you look lost. And in a welcome relief for the American contingent, the 1MC system doesn't crackle with announcements 24 hours a day, and the officers don't carry radios to contact one another or the captain.

"When you have a third of the ship asleep at any given time, it doesn't make much sense to be waking them by blaring unnecessary announcements every few minutes," one British officer said.

In fact, the only announcement is from the operations centre that details the day's plan and tests important alarms. The only other time you hear the loudspeaker is when there's a problem, such as a fire or engineering casualty.

And why don't the officers carry radios like their American counterparts? "What the bloody hell do you need a radio for?" the British officer asked. "You know the plan, what the captain's intentions and expectations are. As an officer, your job is to lead, and if you need to talk to the captain all the time, then you're not doing your job or letting him do his."

Another philosophical difference is that the British are open to ideas that to Americans seem goofy, but work, such as the 12° ramp at the bow of the ship that dramatically improves Harrier operations. Senior US naval officers over the decades have vetoed the idea, saying they don't like how it looks and that it takes up three helicopter landing spots. British and Marine officers say only one deck spot is lost to the "ski jump."

To a man, Marine pilots want the ramps installed on their ships to improve operational flexibility and safety.

"We're all in love with the ski ramp because when you come off that ramp, you're flying," Bradicich said. "From our ships, if you're fully loaded, you need 750 feet, and even then you've got some sink once you clear the deck. Here, you can do the same thing in 450 feet and you're climbing."

But the ramp is intimidating at first sight, pilots said.

"I expected it to be violent, but when you take off, it's almost a non-event," said Maj. Grant 'Postal' Pennington, a pilot with VMA-513 at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona. "Up you go, and you're climbing. It's a great experience."

Equally important is the ship that's bolted to the ramp, pilots said.

"Some of our younger guys who haven't flown from our ships yet are in for a big surprise when they do," Bradicich said. "This is probably the best ship you could possibly fly a Harrier from. It's not very big, but it's really stable, no roll, just a little pitch, not like the flat-bottom gators that roll so much. You've got the island moving 30 feet in each direction when you're trying to land. That tends to get your attention."

The combination of ski ramp, stability and dedicated crew contributed to a breakneck operational pace. The Marines proudly logged a ship record of 79 take-offs and landings in one day.

"These guys are great. We've qualified 28 guys in three days, most with eight landings and take-offs, so even though we said that we were going to crawl, walk, run, our pace has been tremendous, even with different procedures," Pennington said. "We like to approach the ship at 45° and hit one of the spots, but they approach from dead astern, come to a hover abeam, slide over, then drop down to the deck. It's different, but you get the hang of it."

The only downside? "The thought that we're going to have to get off," Bradicich said.

To welcome the Marines aboard, the ship's company invited their American guests to an evening of traditional Royal Navy tomfoolery, Horse Racing Night. Outlandish costumes were encouraged, and the event, held in the ship's hangar deck on July 21 because of choppy weather, was hosted by an Elvis impersonator in full polyester regalia as the ship's band played.

The next day, an athletic competition was held on Illustrious' flight deck, pitting the Royal Navy against the Marine Corps in six events: rowing; weightlifting; tractor pull; the standard Royal Navy physical fitness, or 'bleep,' test; shuttle run with two 40-pound sandbag weights; and a tug of war.

To the Marines' chagrin, the Brits won all the events except for weightlifting.

In a more military contest, the Marine aircraft dropped dummy bombs and fired 20mm rounds against a target towed by Illustrious that produces a geyser of water and serves as an aim point.

Sailors expressed confidence that the Marines wouldn't hit the target, and despite several close calls — including a mock bomb attack by one of the youngest pilots, 1st Lt Douglas 'Rosie' Rosenstock — that lifted it out of the water, the target escaped unscathed.

Reproduced by permission of US Marine Corps Times

THE A-TEAM

● *US Marine Corps Harriers fly over Illustrious as she leads her task group including the US Ships Monterey, San Jacinto, Carney, Nicholas and Simpson through the Atlantic and (above) flight deck teams check the American jump jets before another day of operations*



● *Sailors from HMS Collingwood shift an old HIVE Wendy House to the Anchor Pre-school*

Last Castle comes to call

ALTHOUGH in her final few months on station in the Falkland Islands, HMS Dumbarton Castle and her company have been working hard to make a difference in people's lives.

A toy penguin from her usual Falklands patrol ground is now the beloved possession of one girl from the Providencia School in Montevideo, Uruguay.

The ship headed over to the South American country in July for a defence diplomacy visit, and the sailors took the opportunity to visit the school for the day.

It is a Catholic after-school day centre used by children of underprivileged families – a place to take part in sports, study on computers and continue learning.

The sailors from the patrol ship picked up cans and brushes to paint the centre's outside wall and railings, then donned gloves for a spot of gardening – before the children arrived and the inevitable football kick-around began.

Although is was, in fact, the South American mid-winter the Brits enjoyed the balmy warmth of an English summer's day (*well, they'd have needed their wellington boots if it was this summer... – Ed*).

Football, handball and basketball led to much hilarity, which was only triumphed when bags of sweets, crisps and toys were handed out by the visiting sailors.

LS Stuart 'Buster' Brown said: "Our visit has put a smile on the faces of these children.

"It means a lot to us too, visiting a school like this and for us a job that takes a few hours might take them a few weeks."

Ten sailors from the last of the Navy's castle ships also paid a call on the British hospital to replenish the blood supplies, following the visit of a fellow sailor from another ship to the intensive care unit earlier this year.

Once back in their home-patch of the Falklands, six sailors from Dumbarton Castle climbed aboard spinning exercise cycles to take part in a six-hour spinning marathon at Mount Pleasant Complex.

The matelots joined teams from the Army and Air Force who were all raising money for Combat Stress, this year's Mount Pleasant charity – and the recent beneficiary of a dinner at Windsor Castle held by the Prince of Wales.

Five of the six 'spinners' were new to the challenge, and they were a bit surprised at how quickly the time went by.

LLogs(CS) 'Elle' Robertson said: "An enjoyable day to my surprise, a good team effort and I'm pleased to have taken part."

AB(MW) 'Millie' Milton was also surprised to admit that it was "a fantastic experience".

The 'old hand' of the group was S/Lt Craig Guest, who last year rode from John O'Groats to Lands End with BRNC.

He said: "For the guys not to have experienced 'spinning' before and to have taken part in this event it is absolutely a tremendous effort by the team."

Overall they raised £535 for the Forces' charity.

This is the final month for the 'Last Castle' on patrol around the Falklands.

At the end of this month she starts the long journey home to the UK and new ship HMS Clyde takes over as Falklands guardship.

Dumbarton Castle is expected home in late November, with a decommissioning parade on November 30. The event is open to all former members of the ship's company.

For more information contact PO(C) McAuley by e-mail at 274-pocomms@a.dii.mod.uk.



● *LS Stuart 'Buster' Brown of HMS Dumbarton Castle with children from Providencia School in Montevideo, Uruguay*

Building bridges on Dartmoor

ROYAL Marines from 42 Commando have built a bridge in Dartmoor after a call for help from the National Park Authority.

The park rangers called on the muscle power of the Marines to dig foundation holes in a remote part of the Bovey valley – due to its isolation and the historic nature of the site machinery cannot be used in this labour of construction.

The Marines also had to lift and shift the stones and concrete needed to build the bridge along the 1,000m bridleway to the site.

Capt Tom Noble RM said: "The Royal Marines, and especially 42 Commando who are based at Bickleigh Barracks on the edge of Dartmoor, have a long established link with Okehampton Battle Camp for use of the training areas, and they have always been extremely accommodating.

"This bridge-building task is an opportunity for us to give something back to the Dartmoor training area."

Red and blue

A COLLECTION at Twickenham railway station after the Army vs Navy rugby match netted a charity haul of £1,372 for the British International Sailors Society and the Army Benevolent Fund.

Organiser Pamela Jones said: "We stood with our red and blue buckets, that at the end of the day took some strain to carry – it is a lot of money in small change, so were were grateful for the lighter notes that were included."

Collingwood goes high and low

UP in the mountainous heights of Snowdonia two teams of willing sailors from HMS Collingwood tackled the MS Challenge, an annual event where the teams carry a wheelchair-bound volunteer over a tough 10km course.

Unlikely as it may sound volunteers for the event are not in short supply as it gives the person with MS (multiple sclerosis) the chance to take part in an activity beyond their normal capacity and to enjoy the scenery along the way.

One team completed the run in just two hours 20 minutes, tackling harsh terrain and heaving their human cargo over bogs, forests and rivers through truly appalling weather conditions.

The Collingwood teams hope to garner more than £1,500 in sponsorship.

Meanwhile back in the local area, sailors from the training base paid a visit to Anchor Pre-school to drop off a Wendy House that had been donated to the school.

The Wendy House was originally from the HIVE, but when the HIVE moved to HMS Sultan Wendy was left behind.

Although not presently looking her best, Wendy is looking forward to a makeover and fresh start at the pre-school where she will be restored to her former glory – in navy blue.

● *One of the teams from HMS Collingwood finishes the final hurdle of the MS Challenge in Snowdonia*





● *From left to right are PO(MA) Walsh, Colonel Eric Van Camp (USMC), PO Drew, Sgt Major Courtney Kyle Curtis (USMC) and PO George* Picture: LA(Phot) Darby Allen

Bemused Marines left beaming

TWO-HUNDRED members of the US Marine Corps had an unusual introduction to life on board a Naval ship during a horse-racing night on carrier HMS Illustrious.

The event, organised by 6 Hotel, 6 Papa and 7 Romeo POs messes, took place in the hangar.

"After a few looks of confusion, particularly because the comperes were Elvis Presley and Captain Jack Sparrow, the US Marine Corps (USMC) got fully involved and enjoyed the event," said the carrier's Lt Cdr Toby Evison.

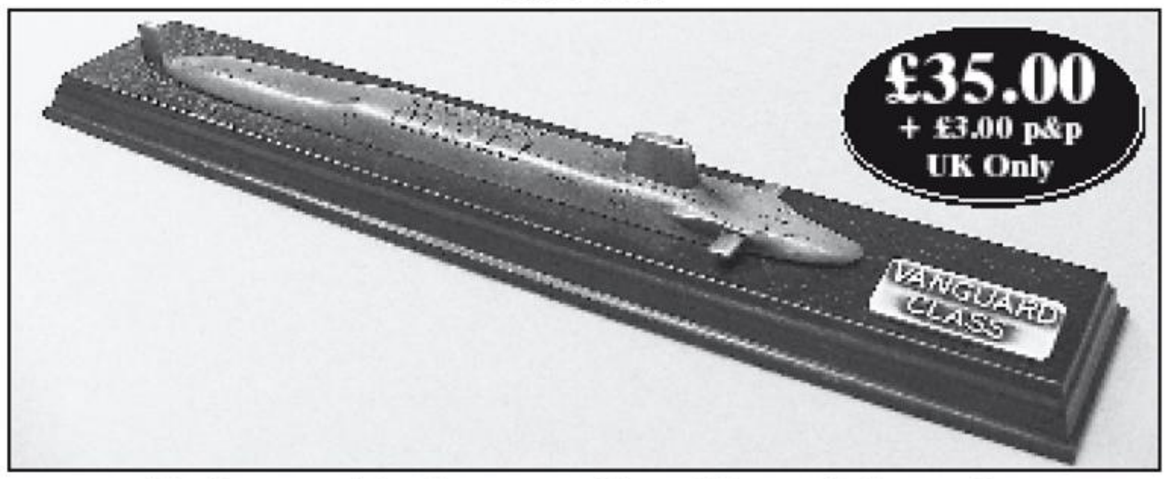
He added: "However finding a marine small enough to be a jockey turned out to be a bit of a struggle."

All the money raised from the betting tote, the hot dog and ice slush stands and the collection came to $1,000 (£500) which the three messes donated to USMC charities.

These were the Wounded Warrior charity which assists wounded marines, and the Marine Corps Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships to family members of marines.

■ *For the US perspective on the evening's entertainment, see pages 16-17.*

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● *Lt Cdr Tim Forrester of Gannet SAR Flight delivers a 90th birthday cake to residents of the Erskine Home in Bishopton*

Grand day out for Gannet

A SEA King from Gannet SAR dropped in on the Erskine Home in Bishopton to celebrate the care home's 90th birthday.

Erskine has provided nursing and medical care to former members of the Armed Forces since its beginnings in at the start of the 20th Century. The charity has four care homes in Scotland.

Lt Cdr Murray, Lt Cdr Tim Forrester, Lt Bunny and POACMN Daz Craig brought a birthday cake inside the Search and Rescue Sea King – and Naval veterans Robert Linton and Malcolm Kinkaid cut the cake to mark the charity's official birthday.



● *Yorkie Holdroyd, MAA Korena James and LOM Kelly Mullans guess the weight of the cake at HMS Raleigh* Picture: Dave Sherfield

Blooming bosoms at HMS Raleigh

IN just four weeks, HMS Raleigh's big-hearted folk have collected more than £8,000 for charity Breast Cancer Care.

Among the fundraising events that took place were a 'guess the weight of the cake' competition – the cake suitably adorned with a healthy bosom, a car boot sale, a 'In the Pink' charity night, and various other collections.

The month of charity events was organised by MAA Korena James and Lisa Jones, the mess manager. MAA James said: "Breast cancer is very common and there is always someone who knows someone who has been affected by the illness, including a number of ladies working here at Raleigh – so we thought this was a very worthwhile cause.

"We were overwhelmed by the success of our efforts and are delighted to have raised so much money."

Torbay do the trio

DESPITE the hectic work of a nine-month extended maintenance period, the crew of submarine HMS Torbay have found time to fit in a few sporting activities and a spot of charity fundraising.

Four members of the crew took successfully part in the Torbay half-marathon. Other crewmembers took on the Worshipful Company of Tin Plate Workers at golf – unsuccessfully.

And finally seven officers and rates from the crew got on their bikes and cycled 135 miles from Workington to Tynemouth to raise more than £1,000 for the boat's charity, Mayfield School in Torquay that helps children with learning difficulties.

Commanding officer Cdr Chris Goodsell said: "The lads are working hard in Scotland and progress in the new weapons fit is impressive.

"But all work and no play, as they say, makes Jack a dull boy.

"I can testify that Torbay's Jacks are not a dull lot – and if they can hit a ball, or run, or cycle they will, especially if it is for charity.

"And I can personally vouch that it is all for a very good cause."

On the run for EarlyBird

DEVONPORT'S 2007 Field Gun Crew raised £170 for the EarlyBird Diabetes Trust in Plymouth.

The money was collected while in training for this year's Brickwoods competition at Collingwood, where the Devonport team came seventh overall, but netted trophies as the best team in the south-west area and for the least penalty points during the runs.

Lt Cdr Nicola Cullen said: "We are delighted to present the Trust with this money to help them in their research into the cause of diabetes in children.

"The team worked hard to train for the contest and are pleased some of this effort will now go to help this worthwhile cause."



● *Cdr Tim Cryar putting his green fingers to the test at Clifton Backies Nature Reserve near York*

Charity is great in D98

CUTTING, cycling, walking and partying have been some of the various means that members of HMS York's ship's company have been changing the world for the better.

Fifty sailors from HMS York headed out to the Clifton Backies Nature Reserve in York during the ship's affiliated visit to clean up and clear out the wildly overgrown stretch of meadowland.

Commanding officer Cdr Tim Cryar (*pictured above*) said: "The crew has been looking forward to this community day, as it gave us the opportunity to undertake a new challenge and put our green fingers to the test.

"We always receive such great support from the people of York and this is our chance to repay them.

"I hope our work has made a real difference, giving the people of York a beautiful nature reserve that they can continue to enjoy."

Before even arriving at their namesake city, keen cyclists from the Type 42 destroyer had pedalled from Newcastle to Hull.

Over four tough days and 180 miles, seven sailors pedalled from Spiller's Wharf in Newcastle, through Whitby (*the team are pictured below under the Captain Cook monument in Whitby*) and on to York in time to be waiting on the jetty at Hull as the ship came alongside.

All this pedal power was for Applefields School in York which provides care for pupils with special educational needs.

Organiser LPT Peden said: "I saw it as an excellent opportunity to raise some money for the ship's charity whilst encouraging health and fitness.

"It was hard work but it was fun, and was enjoyed by all those who took part – even if some of the more mature team members took a few days to recover..."

It was footwork that kept six teams from the ship's company busy at the end of June when they took part in the White Ensign Walk, raising money for the Falkland Veterans Foundation.

Rather than a straightforward walk POMA Jack Nicholson set the teams a tough challenge following grid references to way points and acquiring evidence along the way.

York's various teams were able to raise over £1,200 for the veterans' charity.

Finally teachers from the Willows School in Portsmouth were welcomed into the senior rates' mess on board to receive the bounty of the fundraising work done by the mess over the lst deployment.

The school, which supports children with special needs, is close to the hearts of the mess as the son of member CPOET(ME) Les Clemens attends the school.





● *Submariner LWEA John 'Wiggy' Bennett plans his route through the Brazilian rain forest* Picture: Dave Sherfield

Wiggy on his way to Amazon

SUBMARINER LWEA John 'Wiggy' Bennett is swapping the Cornish hills of his homebase at HMS Raleigh for the Amazonian jungle of Brazil next month.

He will be tackling the 'Jungle Marathon' – a 200km (124 miles) sponsored footrace through the Brazilian rainforest.

The race is run in six stages over seven days along existing paths and tracks, through streams and rivers – and one stage is an 87km (54 miles) run overnight.

Runners have to be self-sufficient, carrying their own food and supplies along the race course.

Wiggy – an experienced triathlete – said: "I was looking for a new challenge and saw this race advertised in a magazine.

"It's the ultimate experience and I wanted to raise money for a good cause along the way.

"I've chosen the Arthritis Research Campaign because arthritis affects so many people.

"I already train regularly for my triathlons so I'm now stepping up and adapting my training regime for this race.

"I run around ten miles most mornings around the hills of Cornwall and I plan to train in a sauna suit to help me acclimatise."

Wiggy is not fazed by the prospect of the jungle – "The organisers clear the path of snakes and scorpions but I'm really into wildlife so I'm looking forward to hearing the monkeys and jaguars."

Anyone wishing to support Wiggy can sponsor him at at www.justgiving.com/crazywiggy.

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PEOPLE



● *Marie Cockburn and husband Bob* Picture: Dave Sherfield

Marie is back in blue

WE have featured her on these pages before, but hats off to Trainee Logistician Marie Cockburn who 17 years after she first entered the establishment has finished her initial training at HMS Raleigh...

And no, it hasn't taken her that long to complete the course – just the regulation eight weeks in fact. But Marie's original Naval career was sent off course two years after she joined the Service when she fell pregnant with her first child Michelle.

The 34-year-old mother of two has now returned to the life in uniform, much to the bafflement of her husband PO Bob Cockburn, himself an initial training instructor at Raleigh.

"My husband thinks I'm mad," said Marie, "and he wouldn't do it at my age, but then he's only got four years left to do.

"I originally joined at 17, but left the Navy to become a full-time mum and wife. Now that my children are older I decided I'd like to carry on with my career.

"It's a lot different now to when I first joined. Then I was a member of the Women's Royal Naval Service; we were separate from the men and only did six weeks initial training.

"Now the course is a lot more physical, with the obstacle and assault course included. My husband took me out running a few times before I joined and said I was a natural athlete.

"I wasn't so sure and I was really worried about how I would do.

"I actually surprised myself by knocking one minute off my time for my 2.4km run in week five."

It *is* rocket science



● *Lt Rory McEwan with students from Neville Lovett Senior School*

OFFICER Lt Rory McEwan took a break from his day job with the Technical Training group in HMS Collingwood to judge a rocket-building competition at a local school.

Pupils from Neville Lovett Senior School had been set the challenge to design and build rockets based around a body made from A3 paper and launched by compressed air.

The efforts of the pupils were judged on their artistic and technical merit, as well as their time in flight, height and distance achieved.

Rory had previously given a presentation to the pupils offering an insight into the different missile systems used by the Royal Navy, and gave advice on the various design features that could be used to boost their rockets' scores.

A spark of an idea

AT the age of 12, the future Royal Marine Lee Hanmore was taken by his dad to a book signing.

Mr Hanmore was a bit of a history buff and wanted the author to put his signature on the tome he was reading.

The author was William 'Bill' Sparks. The book was *The Last of the Cockleshell Heroes*.

Lee admits that the meeting "went a bit over my head" – but several years down the line the now green beret is following in the heroes' wake.

With a fellow Royal Marine Commando, Lee, based at CTC RM in Lympstone intends to recreate Operation Frankton – the official name for the 'Cockleshell heroes' raid – as Bill Sparks and his comrades did it: in traditional canoes; paddling by night; sleeping rough – in December.

Pretty much the only thing missing will be the Germans.

In December 1942 a dozen commandos paddled up the Gironde to destroy German shipping in the port of Bordeaux – something they succeeded in doing but at a terrible cost.

Only two of the Royals survived the raid – Maj 'Blondie' Hasler and Mne Bill Sparks – the rest were drowned, killed, or captured by the Nazis and subsequently executed as 'saboteurs'.

Sixty-five years on Lee has enlisted the help of Portsmouth naval base support organisation FSL to build a replica canoe, or cockle – hence the name of the subsequent book and film – so the recreation of the mission will be as authentic as possible.

"The plans for the boats changed all the time – there's no definitive version saying 'this is the cockle used,'" explained Graham Feasey of FSL, who is overseeing a team of apprentices.

"It's not easy building the boats – it's actually quite intense, even though it's only wood and canvas, because we want to use the same methods as they did 60 years ago."

Authenticity is key to the recreation. Lee will take it in turns to sleep in his boat as the men did in 1942, while his colleague performs sentry duty. The duo will paddle by night and rest by day.

"We are not using anything which was not used in 1942 – we even have replica ration packs from the era," he explained.

"There will be a safety boat with us because if we capsize there's no way of righting the canoe again with 150lbs of kit aboard.

"Negotiating the river is going to be a shock to the system, but hopefully by then all our training will have paid off."

All of which begs a simple question: why?

"Many of the recruits and qualified marines I serve with have heard of the raid but perhaps don't know who carried it out or what it was for, so a key aim is to raise awareness," said Lee.

"People have paddled the route since 1942 but using modern kit, or in the summer, but as far as we're aware, no-one has done an authentic recreation like this."

Culdrose top of the RIAT acts

THE KING Hussein Memorial Sword – a trophy awarded annually for the best overall display at the prestigious Royal International Air Tattoo – has been given to pilots from RNAS Culdrose.

The Cobham Formation, comprising of the Serco FRADU Black Seahawks based at Culdrose and FR Aviation Falcons based in Bournemouth, beat off competition from the Red Arrows and highly esteemed teams from Italy, Spain and the USA to net the top prize.

The FRADU team's real job is to provide realist airborne threat attacks during Royal Navy training exercises such as the 'Thursday Wars' which take place off Plymouth.

The team members practise their display skills in their spare time and this year's tight schedule meant that they had only five opportunities to train together before RIAT.

Black Seahawk team leader Martin Stoner said: "We were just so proud and thrilled to have been honoured, not least because we were up against the very best display teams in the world.

"We have been aiming to win a trophy at RIAT for many years, but it was beyond our wildest dreams to win the best of the best."

People who attended Culdrose Air Day on August 1 had the opportunity to see the winning trophy on display, plus watch the aerial choreography of the expert flyers of the Culdrose unit.



Picture: LA(Phot) Billy Bunting

KATERINE Poole of RNAS Yeovilton, pictured with Cdre Chris Palmer, has taken the first steps on the ladder, becoming the first student to complete an apprenticeship as a Royal Naval Air Traffic Control Assistant (ATCA). ATCAs support air traffic control officers in the demanding business of regulating the flow of military and civilian air traffic in the congested air space above the UK.

Royal audience for Great War veterans

IT SEEMS the secrets to long life are cleanliness, contentment and trust – according to one World War 1 naval veteran.

Two of the last three survivors of the Great War travelled to Buckingham Palace for a garden party as part of the events marking 90 years since the Battle of Passchendaele (*see next month's Navy News for a four-page supplement on the battle*).

Henry Allingham, who signed up with the Royal Naval Air Service in 1915 and is a founder member of the Royal Air Force, joined with William Stone, who signed up for the Royal Navy at Devonport in 1918, and served through World War 1 and World War 2 until he retired in 1945, for a private audience with the Queen at Buckingham Palace.

Before the event, Mr Stone said: "I am overwhelmed to be meeting the Queen.

"The secret to long life is clearn living, be a contented man, and trust in the Lord.

"My motto is: keep going."

Mr Allingham, the oldest man in the United Kingdom and the last survivor of the Battle of Jutland, commented: "There will be a bond between William and me for as long as we both live.

"I am here today not for myself, but in memory of all those who didn't make it home."

The veterans were welcomed by the First Sea Lord and Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Sir Jonathon Band at a small reception inside the Ministry of Defence before their Palace appointment.



Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns takes aim on the Mk44 Mini gun at HMS Collingwood's weapon system simulator, watched by CPO Matthew Rose, Cdre Steve Kirby – the commanding officer of HMS Collingwood, and Command WO Vic Parsons – who seems quite amused by his boss' shooting skills. During the visit the admiral also visited the bridge simulator training facility, and the command training department, and saw an unusual form of training when Phase 2 trainees 'let their hair down' in a wet'n'wild *It's a Knockout* competition.



● *Brothers Logs(CS) Stephen 'Del' Trotter (left) and LLogs(CS) Michael 'Del' Trotter (right), flank their father LLogs(CS) Dave 'Del' Trotter at the Falklands commemoration in London*

Picture: LLogs(CS) Dave (not actually 'Del') Jenkins

Fellows of the Falklands

THE COMMEMORATIONS in London to mark 25 years since the Falklands Conflict brought together veterans, friends and family in a highly-emotive day of reminiscences.

One veteran walked proudly in the parade amid the still-serving veterans, then met up with his two sons, also in the Royal Navy, on The Mall.

LLogs(CS)(Prep) – or until a few months ago Leading Chef – Dave 'Del' Trotter left the Navy after 24 years – during the South Atlantic war he was serving on HMS Ardent under the command of then Cdr Alan West when the ship was attacked and sunk in the midst of battle.

But nine years after leaving the Navy Dave was tempted back into a dark blue uniform, and now serves as a full-time reservist on board HMS Campbeltown.

Son Michael says of his father: "If he was a stick of rock and you cut him in half, he would say 'Royal Navy' all the way through."

His oldest son Logs(CS)(Delivery) Stephen 'Del' Trotter is, what was once, a steward on board HMS Ark Royal, which was in London as part of the commemoration week.



● *WO John Phillips RE and FCPO(D) Mick Fellows*

Younger son Michael 'Del' Trotter was himself a Leading Chef but is now in the process of finishing up his training at DCAE Cosford as a fledgling RN photographer (he switched branches before the name changed, although the two are not necessarily connected...), and was in London as part of the media team following the day's events.

Michael said: "Dad said it was one of the best days of his life – catching up with his old shipmates and celebrating.

"It was just a crying shame that our little sis couldn't make it up because it made for a really special day."

Little sis DSA Susan (sadly not 'Del') Trotter is a dental assistant in the Navy.

For other veterans on the day it was a chance to catch up with people that they had not seen since the end of the conflict.

These included Fleet Chief Petty Officer (Diver) Mick Fellows and Warrant Officer John Phillips of the Royal Engineers, both of whom dealt with the unexploded bombs during the raging conflict.

Mick said: "We were both uniquely awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for our bomb disposal work in the Falklands – the only two non-commissioned Royal Navy and Army warrant officers to be so honoured since the inception of the award.

"I disposed of unexploded bombs on HMS Antrim and Plymouth; John disposed of a bomb on Argonaut and unfortunately was wounded, whilst attempting to dispose of one on Antelope."

Back in Portsmouth, a rousing fanfare entitled *Corporate* written by Maj Mick Dowrick of the RM Band Service was featured in a concert to mark the anniversary.



● *The Leeds Carnegie team run in the mudflats of the Exe Estuary*

Mud, sweat and rugby

RUGBY players may well think they are tough... but they've got nothing on the Royal Marines, as members of the Leeds Carnegie Rugby Union Premiership side found out when they spent four days down at the Commando Training Centre in Lympstone.

The demanding regime of arduous physical training and gruelling team building has been a pre-season training session for the sporting professionals.

Lt Col Steve Richards said: "We were all impressed with the high level of commitment and determination to succeed shown by the team. To a man they rose to the Commando challenge. We wish them well in the new season."

In turn the rugby players paid tribute to the Royal Marines ethos.

Deeply dippy

CHIEF Petty Officer Craig Caesar is now in the Guinness Book of Records for completing 1,011 dips on parallel bars in one hour, when he weighs over 16 stone.

Craig (*right*) beat the record back in May but has just received word that his dipping effort has been confirmed as a record-breaker.

He said: "I have always been fit, and I used to compete in the field gun competitions which is physically demanding.

"I was talking to one of the guys in my gym – he had previously held the world record at 883 dips – but he said that no one over 16 stone, which is quite heavy for that kind of exercise, had been able to do 1,000 dips.

"So I thought that I would give it a go."

Craig spent four months in training, building up his upper body strength and stamina, before taking on the record attempt.

His certificate was presented to him by Lt Col Philip Sampson, commanding officer of RMR Tyne.

Lt Col Sampson said: "Marines like to think of themselves as the strongest element of the Service, but hats off to Craig."

Craig added: "It's great to finally get my certificate. It makes it seem more real that I am a world record holder. I just hope no one tries to break it."





Caribbean dippers

THEIR recent deployment to the Caribbean proved an ideal opportunity for 28 sailors and marines from HMS Ocean to enjoy the excellent diving in the region – encouraged by Lt Col Nick Bruce-Jones, the amphibious operations officer on board the assault ship.

Under his expert guidance, 11 sailors and Royal Marines new to diving qualified as Open Water Divers, and another five netted their Advanced certification.

Cpl Steve Neno said: "Diving took place in all ports of call from Martinique to Trinidad – with the exception of Norfolk, Virginia, where the water was too cold and murky for the team to find attractive.

"A total of 205 dives saw the Caribbean Dip members spend in total almost six days underwater, with the highlight by universal acclaim the diving in the waters off Tortola in the British Virgin Islands.

"Almost all who dived on Caribbean Dip are now determined to continue their diving adventure by joining their local branch of the RNRM Sub-Aqua Association."

The association of which Lt Col Bruce-Jones just happens to be chairman...

TWO·SIX

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

Survey backs Forces' resettlement system

A REPORT has concluded that the MOD offers a "good range of resettlement support" for those leaving the Armed Forces."

The National Audit Office (NAO) also decided that "most people adapt back into civilian life easily and comfortably", although it also notes that a minority have a more difficult time finding employment, housing or making the social transition from the Forces to Civvy Street.

The NAO survey of those who left in the past two years found that two-thirds believed the support offered by the MOD helped them find work, and 94 per cent of leavers who were seeking employment through the Career Transition Partnership programme found a job within six months.

In 2006-07, around 25,000 people left the Forces, and all leavers had access to some form of assistance – the level of support is determined by length of service, not rank.

Those discharged for medical reasons are entitled to the highest level of support, regardless of length of service.

Support includes coaching in CV writing and job interview techniques, a contribution of £534 towards the cost of training and associated travel and accommodation costs, and up to 35 working days to prepare for the transition to civilian life.

Dartmouth links with university

BRNC has entered an historic ten-year agreement with the University of Plymouth for delivery and accreditation of the academic aspects of its officer training programmes.

The agreement builds on an existing partnership in which trainee officers can study for a foundation degree in Naval Studies at Dartmouth and progress to the university to gain a BSc in Marine Studies.

Cdre Martin Alabaster, of BRNC, said: "We pride ourselves on a very long history of selecting talented young people and developing them into first-class leaders, who often go on to serve their country in the challenging conditions of the front line.

"As part of our commitment to educational excellence, we are delighted to formalise this agreement for provision of educational services with the University of Plymouth.

"It means we can offer our trainee officers and other staff access to accredited university education and professional development throughout their careers."

Under the agreement, it is intended that academic staff at BRNC will become staff of the University of Plymouth.

They will continue to be based at Dartmouth, but will have access to a range of university services and facilities, which will enhance study programmes for RN and RM trainees based at the college.

Staff at Dartmouth will also be able to develop their scholarly activities by engaging in research and innovation activities.

RNPT event dates

DATES and details of the RN Presentation Team's events in the coming weeks are:

- **Tues September 25:** Apex City Quay Hotel, **Dundee**;
- **Weds September 26:** Keavil House Hotel, Crossford, **Dunfermline**;
- **Weds October 3:** Hotel Bristol, **Newquay**;
- **Thurs October 4:** Barnstaple Hotel, **Barnstaple**;
- **Tues October 9:** University of Gloucestershire Park Campus, The Park, **Cheltenham**;
- **Weds October 10:** Warwick Racecourse, **Warwick**;
- **Tues October 23:** Macclesfield Town Hall, **Macclesfield**.

Anyone wanting to book a place at a presentation should contact the RNPT on 020 8833 8020 or email rnpt@gtnet.gov.uk

Discount draw

A DISCOUNT website for serving personnel, veterans and their families celebrates its tenth anniversary with a prize draw.

ForcesDiscount.com – no connection with the MOD's Discount Brochure website – offers savings and discounts on a range of products and services.

You can enter the draw online, quoting CODE NN10, or by post, sending contact details on a postcard to Prize Draw MPM Associates, FREEPOST NEA8487, Doncaster DN9 3BR, quoting CODE NN10.

Closing date is November 1.

Forms in the post to encourage voting

HUNDREDS of thousands of forms will be despatched to members of the Armed Forces this month as part of a campaign to get Service personnel on the electoral register.

The campaign, from the Electoral Commission and the MOD, comes amid speculation of a possible early General Election.

There are also currently local elections planned for May 1 2008 across the whole of Wales, in 164 areas of England, and for the London Mayor and Assembly.

A recent survey of Service personnel found that nine out of ten said they would like to have a say in who governs the country.

However, the same survey also found low levels of electoral registration amongst the Forces.

To vote in an election, eligible electors must have their name on the electoral register no later than 11 days before polling day.

In addition to distributing electoral registration forms, each unit will hold a Registration Day in October where specially assigned Unit Registration Officers will focus their attention on encouraging Service personnel to sign up to vote.

Electoral Registration Officers from local authorities will also make visits to bases in their area.

The activity coincides with the annual canvass during which UK householders are asked by local authorities to supply their details for the Electoral Register.

Service personnel based in the UK can register in the same way as ordinary electors by filling in and returning the annual canvass form, while those who are based, or likely to be posted, abroad are advised to register as 'Service Voters'.

Due to a recent change in legislation, people registering as Service Voters will only have to register every three years instead of annually.

Nina Zialluah, Head of Campaigns at the Electoral Commission, said: "In a recent survey of Service personnel, over 90 per cent of those questioned said that they would like to be able to vote at the next General Election.

"Such an election could be called at any time – but you can't vote in it unless you are on the electoral register."

"We know that Service personnel lead busy lives and that operational commitments can sometimes make it more difficult for them to register to vote than their civilian counterparts.

"That's why we've worked with the Ministry of Defence to make it as easy as possible by sending out registration forms to all."

More information about registering, and a downloadable registration form, can be found at www.aboutmyvote.co.uk



● *Registration forms on their way to every member of the Armed Forces*

Research 'supports MOD tour policies'

THE MOD has welcomed the publication of research by King's College into tour intervals and mental illness – and claims it confirms existing policies on tour intervals are right.

The MOD said the overall rate of mental illness in the Armed Forces remains low, and is not necessarily connected to operational deployment.

This low rate of mental illness is consistent with previous research by King's College.

The number of new cases of mental disorders, of all types and regardless of cause, in the first quarter of this year was 0.58 per cent of the Armed Forces strength, and the rate of new cases of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) was "very low" at 0.03 per cent.

Derek Twigg, Under Secretary of State for Defence, said: "We recognise mental illness as a serious and disabling condition and we want to ensure that our people have the best possible mental health support.

"This is why the MOD commissioned research to monitor the health of those deployed on operations.

"We have taken great steps to raise awareness and reduce the stigma associated with mental illness.

"These include pre- and post-deployment briefing and the availability of support, assessment and, if required, treatment – both during and after deployments.

"We are studying the research to see how we can reduce even further the number of troops who suffer from mental illness.

"We have always been open that we have a high operational tempo but, as the Chief of the Defence Staff has said in the past, we are stretched but not overstretched.

"The vast majority of British troops do not have their tours extended and are on operations for no longer than six to seven months.

"As such it indicates that our current policies on the duration of tours are right.

"We are taking steps to remind the small number of troops who see their tours extended about the support that is available to them.

"We have, for example, mental health nurses in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I would encourage Service personnel who think that they might be suffering from mental illness related to their service to seek professional help."

On their return from operations, regular personnel can access out-patient care at one of the 15 military Departments of Community Mental Health in the UK and overseas. In-patient care is provided by the Priory Group.

A recent Defence Analytical Services Agency (DASA) survey concluded that the number of Service personnel diagnosed with a mental illness was broadly the same whether they did or did not deploy on operations.

Commando trainees turn to smoothies



● *Lt Col Jani Marok officially opens the new smoothie bar at CTCRM Lympstone*

SUMMER is a time when people become more health-conscious, so the timing was perfect for the latest incentive at the Commando Training Centre Royal Marines (CTCRM) – the opening of Smoothies and Shakers fruit drinks bar.

The Commanding Officer of the CTCRM, Lt Col Jani Marok RM, officially opened the new bar, and recruits and staff were given free samples of the numerous types of smoothie drinks available, including Pineapple Power Punch (pineapple, raspberry and banana) and Blueberry Blush (blueberry, strawberry and redcurrants).

Lt Col Marok said: "The drinks on offer are excellent value for money whilst also being extremely healthy.

"They are a welcome addition to the variety of foods and drinks that are available within the Commando Training Centre."

Teacher training at CTCRM has been recognised by the Government's Quality Improvement Agency as among the best in the country.

The Lympstone establishment has become a member of the Peninsular Centre of Excellence in Teacher Training (CETT), of which there are only 11 in the country.

CETTs are intended to develop and extend good practice in adult teacher training, providing a good role model for other education establishments.

CTCRM's successful method is based on 'teach, mentor and coach', with more than 125 teachers benefiting in the past four years.

Ideas initiative bears fruit

THE first contract under the MOD's Competition of Ideas initiative has been awarded to Plextec Ltd.

The £300,000 contract will support research into the technology allowing improved communication between military vehicles on convoy, and between convoys and their base.

The competition, launched last autumn, challenged the UK science and technology community to offer innovative ideas for tackling the most pressing defence problems.

TWO·SIX

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

The Royal Navy writes on the issues affecting you

TWO·SIX

Project Fisher team trawls for answers

COMMODORE Ian Corder, the man heading up Project Fisher – the Navy Board's new flexible manning initiative – has a tough job on his hands.

He and his small dedicated team have got to grasp the nettle and transform the way the Navy mans its ships – as their project's namesake Admiral 'Jackie' Fisher did almost one hundred years ago.

"Best known as the man who introduced dreadnoughts and submarines, Admiral Fisher also brought about a whole range of forward-looking changes to the employment of naval personnel – and that's what we need to do now," said Cdre Corder.

Flexible manning is not a simple equation. There is no easy answer to the problem of an increased operational tempo, potentially longer deployments, and the need to have the right people on board with the right know-how.

This all has to be balanced with the need for people to have breaks between deployments to look after their home lives and prepare for their next tour of duty.

Already out in the Fleet there are various approaches in action – some have been in place for years, some are just coming to the end of their trial runs.

The commodore explained: "There are already a range of systems in use that we can look at – three-watch rotations in some of the survey ships, SSBN two-crewing, and some of the sophisticated schemes in use by the RFA."

More recently HMS Edinburgh has just come home with HMS Exeter's crew on board after a South Atlantic sea swap.

In the Gulf minehunters HMS Blyth and Ramsey welcome rotating crews from MCM1 Sandowns.

And HMS Endurance will head south next year for an 18-month deployment, with sailors arriving and departing in small numbers throughout the time away.

"Trials like sea swap are just that – trials. We're looking at the good bits and the bad bits," said Cdre Corder.

"This is not about putting the entire Service into a sea swap, or into any of the other options that we are considering.

"It's going to be a mixture of manning solutions."

"But it is essential that the Navy looks at different, and where necessary, innovative solutions to its future manning."



● *Cdre Ian Corder (right) discusses manning issues with officers on board HMS Edinburgh*

He states simply: "If we continue as we are we will have a Navy that struggles to meet the challenges of the future."

The Navy and its sailors face tough demands in terms of operations, equipment and skills.

"As an example, a Type 42 destroyer has a company of around 270. A Type 45 has a significantly smaller company, but will need the same number of officers and senior rates – most of the reduction is in junior ratings positions," he said.

"Whilst this is great for the promotion prospects of those in the system now, those senior people have to come from somewhere – we need to develop our junior rates in terms of skill and experience to grow them to become the senior rates of tomorrow.

"If we don't look at how we man our ships and find another way, it will lead to a structural imbalance in manpower."

The project team is clear that it is not just about finding an answer to the needs of the Fleet.

"If, in its approach to manning, the Navy can be more agile," said CPO Steve Legg, one of the three senior rates currently in the team, "then we will get better outcomes – not just for the Service, but for the individual sailor."

He stressed: "This has real potential benefits for everyone if we get it right."

CPO Jason King agreed: "There is going to be extensive consultation. We are specifically going out to the fleet, flotillas and squadrons to get their inputs."

"We're going to experiment – take the good points and discard the bad and plan the next step based on real practical experience of what works and what doesn't."

Cdre Corder acknowledges that there are some real problems brewing in the future, but he makes it clear that the Navy Board is prepared to try new ideas and new approaches to avoid the pitfalls.

"Project Fisher is to be evolutionary, not revolutionary, building on the work that has gone before but looking beyond the conventional approaches," he said.

"Effectively Fisher is the logical next step on the path trodden by Topmast and branch development."

For people inside the Service it might mean a break from expectations and traditional employment paths, but it promises a future where an individual's own skills, career and needs are better balanced within their ship or submarine's working life.

Finally one tenet remains at the core of any approach to change – "Fighting spirit and ethos are fundamental to our business.

"We can have the best manned, best equipped ships and submarines in the world but they will come to nothing without the will and determination to fight, and to fight together as a team.

"This aspect will be absolutely fundamental to all our deliberations."

Fisher is to become the central component of the Navy Board's personnel agenda, championed personally by 2SL.

There is unlikely to be a 'one size fits all' answer, but rather a mosaic picture that reflects the differing aspects of the fleet, which together provide the Navy with sufficient flexibility to deal with future operational demands, yet safeguard the careers and lifestyles of its people.

Fast-track opportunity for managers

ROYAL Navy personnel have an opportunity to develop management and leadership skills through a new partnership with the Chartered Management Institute.

As part of the alliance, individuals of all ranks will be able to gain fast-track membership of the Institute, giving them access to nationally-recognised qualifications, career advice and a UK network of widely-experienced managers.

As part of the alliance, the Institute has mapped its membership levels with the Royal Navy's own ranking system and promotion courses, with midshipmen and petty officers equating to the Associate Member level, lieutenants and warrant officers equating to full Members.

Sailors can also widen their knowledge by attending local branch events on business issues, where they can meet other managers and build their contacts.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns said: "The nature of the Navy's business demands the highest standards in leadership and management from its personnel across the rank structure.

"To allow our people to meet these demands, the Service pays considerable attention to ensure individuals are given the appropriate training and experience.

"It is therefore very gratifying to me personally, as the principal personnel officer, to have these skills formally endorsed by the CMI."

WOs put the RN world to rights

PERSONNEL-related issues, charities, pensions and the British Legion were among the topics discussed on the first morning of the seventh Naval Service WO1 Conference at HMS Collingwood.

The afternoon session included high-level briefs from the Special Reconnaissance Regiment and the Human Intelligence Corps.

The activity continued into the evening, when delegates received further updates and information with informal drinks and presentations in the SRs Mess.

There was also a working dinner where the guest of honour was conference sponsor Vice Admiral Adrian Johns, Second Sea Lord.

Also in attendance were two other members of the Navy Board, Vice Admiral Trevor Soar, Chief of Material (Fleet), and Rear Admiral Alan Massey, ACNS.

In addition, the Flag Officer Sea Training, the Naval Secretary, Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland and also a number of 2SL's personnel directors were at dinner.

Day two concentrated on personnel matters, kicking off with a brief on manpower figures and manning issues.

Then syndicates discussed matters including:

- Flexible Manning – how best can we man ships in the future?
- WO1 Employment – how best can we sustain employment of the WO1 in the future?
- The Moral Component – how best can our people realise our fighting power?

The sessions were facilitated by subject matter experts from Fleet HQ; there was much discussion and "blue-sky" thinking – food for thought for HQ.

The final event was a lively plenary session, chaired by 2SL, with the panel comprising members of the Navy Board and other senior admirals present.

Graphics staff make mark

SEVEN staff at the RN Graphics Centre in Portsmouth have been recognised for their exceptionally high degree of professional skills.

Five were awarded membership of the Chartered Society of Designers (CSD), with the other two receiving fellowships.

The awards were presented by John Sermon, president of the CSD.

In order to achieve membership designers must have a recognised academic qualifications, have been a practising designer for a number of years and undergo a stringent assessment with a comprehensive portfolio of work which was judged against the best of their peer in industry.

Mr Sermon said that he was surprised at the diversity of the work carried out by RN Graphics Centre for the RN and impressed with the very high standard overall, which covering all aspects of graphics design.

He also noted that the Centre had achieved the highest percentage pass rate of any organisation assessed by the society.

The award ceremony was attended by Capt Mark Windsor RN, line manager of the RNGC, who congratulated the team on their awards, adding it was just recognition for a highly-regarded team of professionals.

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the RN?

To feature in 2-6 contact Lt Cdr Dave Joyce at Fleet Media Ops on 93832 8809 or Lt Cdr Harvey Burwin at DPR(N) on 9621 85984.



● *CINCFLEET Admiral Sir James Burnell-Nugent meets staff at the Maritime Warfare Centre, HMS Collingwood*

Admiral goes to MWC

CINCFLEET Admiral James Burnell-Nugent has opened the Maritime Warfare Centre at its new home in Marlborough Building, HMS Collingwood.

Previously situated at Portsdown Technology Park and Southwick Park, MWC is now well-integrated as a lodger at Fareham.

In addition to unveiling a plaque to mark the official opening, CINCFLEET emphasised the importance of MWC's Operational Knowledge Exploitation (OKX) work, as reported on in our July edition, highlighting the recent foiled terrorist attacks in London and Glasgow as prime examples of why lesson management is key.





Project WelCom E (Welfare Communications Everywhere) is provided by Paradigm as part of the Skynet 5 PFI contract with the MoD. Paradigm provides communication services that link military personnel on operational duty, with their families and friends back home.

UK military personnel can top-up the "private" side of their account card and buy disposable phone cards from the PTT, NAAFI and BFPO outlets.



Sail of the century

HAILED as the 'world's most advanced warship', HMS Daring has successfully completed her first month at sea around the Western Isles and, chiefly, the Firth of Clyde.

Richard Hargreaves joined her for the final day of twists and turns off the Isle of Arran.

THERE was, one Christmas as a child, only one present which would suffice: Tracy Island.

The home of *Thunderbirds* and International Rescue was a marvel of technology, with launch pads hidden behind palm trees and swimming pools.

There is, you might think, little correlation between puppets on strings and the world's most advanced warship.

Little correlation, that is, until a huge sliding door opens in the superstructure to reveal the sea boat 'hangar' (minus the thunderous *Thunderbirds* theme, of course). As the door flips up, so a guard rail automatically pops out of the deck floor.

The sea boat itself is held in the grip of a giant claw. It seamlessly swings out of the boat bay on a hydraulic arm (officially it's called a Pellegrini davit), the claw lets go and the boat and crew are winched down in the water.

All very Gucci. But why? Why not simply launch sea boats as we do now?

It's not because we can, it's not because we were feeling extravagant, it's because we don't want to get blown out of the water.

The reason is stealth – to present as small a radar cross section to the electronic eyes of the enemy as possible.

Pictures: BAE Systems







There are few 'bumps' on Daring's upper deck, no boats, capstans, lockers sticking out. The lines of the hull are as flush as they can be.

Such stealth lines make Daring an unmistakeable sight and, perhaps compared with her predecessors, less attractive.

It is better to be looking out from Daring then staring at her.

Stand on the bridge and you're a good 25ft higher up than in a Type 42 or 23.

Couple that extra elevation with big windows and you have, says officer of the watch Lt Steve Banfield, "a wonderful panorama".

He continues: "We're all in agreement that this is the best ship we've driven. She's amazing from top to bottom."

Top begins with the principal air defence radar, Sampson, perched on top of the angular main mast.

We have in the past likened the Sampson radar on top of the main mast to Sputnik – a large metallic sphere with antennae.

The reality of Sampson as its 6½ ton bulk spins constantly is more like an egg speared by cocktail sticks: it's most definitely not round.

As for the bottom, well we didn't get that far down.

We did, however, wander around the bowels of Daring, including the Ship Control Centre.

Typically it's a room with dials, meters, lights and switches on a schematic board fixed to the wall and consoles.

In Daring it's *Star Trek* consoles and flat-screen computer displays.

So too is the operations room, not a dingy, poorly-lit, cramped room, but a bright, spacious command centre.

Each warfare officer/rating sits at a three-screen computer terminal staring at full-colour screens.

Don't expect X-Box and PlayStation graphics, however. Aircraft moving around on the Sampson display remain little more than blips.

From the Firth of Clyde, those blips could be tracked approaching Glasgow *and* Edinburgh airports. (Tests of Sampson in the Solent have followed aircraft in the airspace of all London's airports, plus Schiphol in Amsterdam and Paris' Charles de Gaulle.)

"You could park one of these ships in the Thames and she could defend London," says Vic Emery, head of surface ships for BAE Systems.

You could... but for one small problem: her missiles aren't ready yet.

In fact, the Aster missile which will be Daring's punch won't be fired using Sampson and the ship's combat computer system until the turn of the year – and not from Daring, but from the barge Longbow which has a copy of the destroyer's missile system.

So what point the sea trials? Well, exactly that: to test Daring's handling at sea.

And rather impressive it is too.

Dead in the water, she can reach top speed (31½kts, three faster than required) in under two minutes. She can be pelting along at 27kts in just 70 seconds.

Pelting along at 27kts does not cause shakes and shudders throughout the ship; on a reasonably fine day on the Clyde Daring scythes through the water, but on the bridge it feels as if she's barely moving.

Speed is of little consequence on its own without agility: Daring can turn inside 3½ ship lengths.

It seems unnatural to see the waters of the Clyde hurtling past the port bridge wing and the murky clouds (this is Scotland, after all) out of the starboard windows.

The ship heels over no more than 12° performing these turns. She does not shake, she does not judder. She glides (although it is wise to have legs akimbo, otherwise you *will* fall over).

And should the instructor tap his pad on the dashboard and demand an emergency stop, Daring can grind to a halt from top speed in about 5½ ship lengths (the Navy asked for 8½) – although you do get a judder as the engines go into reverse, or rather astern.

Before heading back up the Clyde to BAE's yard at Scotstoun, Daring had clocked up 4,500 miles on sea trials around the west coast of Scotland.

She did so using a quarter of the fuel her predecessor Type 42s would have used, and half that consumed by a Type 23. (Daring could, in theory, reach the Falklands without refuelling.)

Nor does she belch that orange-brown smoke which envelops much of the existing Fleet as they plough the waves.

And all of that makes Daring kind on the environment as well as the RN's pockets.

The *Thunderbirds* sea boat launcher will also save the taxpayer money in the long-run.

With less clutter, with less nooks and crannies on the upper deck, there are fewer places for the elements to do their worst – so the theory is less time and money will be spent greasing, cleaning rust, painting.

Yet for all the automation, for all the *Thunderbirds* wizardry, some jobs still demand physical effort.

A lift might carry the 'Kryten' 4.5in main gun shells from the upper deck to the magazine, and a hoist may then raise the warheads to the gun room, but all 46kg of shell and canister has to be lifted manually from the hoist to the stowage rack and, in action, from the rack to the loader.

Kryten has been fired (not in anger) at the Benbecula range to test the strains it placed on the destroyer.

So the main gun thumps away quite nicely, as do the 30mm cannon (also tested) and the engines have been given a good thrashing.

But there remains much to do in Daring; this is the beginning of a very long road.

She will not go to sea again until next spring, by which time she will have her first Commanding Officer in the form of Capt Paul Bennett. And he will not receive the keys to the ship until the end of 2008 when BAE formally hand over Daring. After that there will be a year of trials and tests before the ship officially enters service towards the end of 2009.

Daring's ship's company presently stands at 67 strong; two-thirds of them sailed on the trials at some stage as observers, as weapons experts, but chiefly as fire-fighting and damage control parties, alongside a BAE crew and engineers.

The rest of the crew from the captain to the deck hands and the chefs were civvies.

And being Scottish that apparently meant 'chips with everything' in the galley and the odd helping of deep-fried black pudding, washed down with Irn Bru (3,600 cans of the soft drink to be precise).

The small RN contingent aboard were visibly impressed by their new surroundings.

"The accommodation is fabulous – you will not see better," enthuses Lt Paul Read, Deputy Weapons Engineer Officer.

"As for the weaponry, it's ground-breaking technology, cutting edge."

All this 'Gucci-ness' does have a downside, however, a sort of *Hotel California* syndrome.

"Once sailors get into Type 45s, they will not want to go back to the rest of the Fleet – and that's not being derogatory to the 42s and 23s," explains Cdr David Shutts, Daring's Marine Engineer Officer and Senior Naval Officer.

"It doesn't get any better than this. Serving in the most advanced warship in the world, where do you go next?"

No chintz, no chutney

"THERE aren't any ice buckets and condom machines aboard are there?" I ask, referring to Holland's De Ruyter I had the good fortune to visit earlier this year.

It's a flippant question, of course. A flippant question, that is, until we wander down a passageway and find an ice cabinet – for sailors to chill their drinks while working. (No condom dispensers, though...)

Actually, there should be no need for ice cabinets: Daring is designed to operate equally in the freezing Arctic and broiling Gulf, unlike her predecessors which were chiefly designed for the Atlantic.

Air conditioning isn't particularly headline-grabbing (unless it packs up).

But the media did make a great deal of fuss of Daring as the first 'iPod warship'.

"That's a load of chutney," says Cdr Shutts. It hasn't, however, stopped it becoming media folklore...

Sailors do not have sockets for the portable music players in their bunk spaces.

They do, however, have an internet connection, and a plug socket for anything electrical. But then the 'shaver warship' or the 'portable iron warship' would never have quite the same soundbite quality...

But Jack (and Jenny and Royal) have been thought about. Typically RN ships are built around a weapon and "squeezing Jack in in every corner" takes second place.

Sailor for sailor (there will be 190 on board eventually), there's two-fifths more living space than in existing destroyers and frigates.

There are no male/female messes, no male/female heads and showers. Loos, wash basins, showers, messes are unisex.

Junior rates don't just have a fridge for their tinnies in future, they have a proper bar, TV room, mess, plus a 'quiet zone' for reading and studying.

Officers enjoy the luxury of a single-berth cabin, a ward room and a dining room (like the carriers). As for that '50s chintz which dogs the Fleet, well both rooms have yet to be kitted out.

We can but hope...



LETTERS



● *The dramatic mission, with Capt Dave Rigg RE and Mne Chris Fraser-Perry strapped to the side of an Apache, that recovered the body of L/Cpl Mathew Ford*

Apache medals

WITH regard to the Apache mission in Afghanistan, would somebody please explain why the four Army Air Corps aircrew and the Royal Engineer captain involved were awarded DFCs and MCs but that the three Royal Marines who clung to the side of the Apache received nothing?

Those Royal Marines, one of whom had been in the RM for only 14 months, had earlier taken part in a major assault on that Taleban stronghold and had to retreat under withering fire, yet they volunteered to fly back into that compound by strapping themselves onto the outside of two Apaches, such was their determination to rescue their fellow Royal Marine and friend.

Why have those gallant Royal Marines been left out of the awards?

– **Dr Lou Armour** (former RM)

The MOD told Navy News:

"Nominations for operational honours are initiated by local commanders in the theatre of operations.

"They are then considered up through the operational chain of command. This process ensures that full account is taken of the perspectives of both those on the ground and others with a wider, impartial view.

"Because of this requirement to maintain the confidentiality of the Honours and Awards process, the Ministry of Defence will not discuss specific instances.

"The actions of all those who took part in the dramatic recovery of L/Cpl Ford were, however, carefully considered.

"Operational awards were granted to four personnel involved in the incident, together with a number of commendations awarded by the Commander of Joint Operations."

A new angle

MAY I be allowed to offer a small contribution to the history of the aircraft carrier angled flight deck?

We were four brothers, all Royal Navy as we came of age. Ronald was lost on the Hood in 1941, Raymond was transferred to the Army because of a slight stammer, I was a Radio Electrician 1947-1955, and finally came Rodney who enlisted as a cadet midshipman in October 1951 and began his Fleet Air Arm flying training at Pensacola, Florida.

Rodney related to me years later how, after each flying training session, there was a class debriefing. Some of these debriefs took the form of 'what ifs'?" and at one particular debrief, Rodney asked: "What if we came in at an angle?"

He said the room went quiet and heads turned towards him. The senior American instructor looked pointedly at him and wrote in his notebook. That must surely have been the moment when the idea of an angled flight deck was born.

Rodney's question was to reach the ears of Vice Admiral-to-be Dennis Campbell. Later that year the US carrier Antietam was modified in New York to have its landing-on set at ten degrees to the fore-and-aft line. The rest, as they say, is history.

Rodney left the Navy in 1959 to resume a career in banking which took him to South Africa. He died suddenly in 2003. I would very much like to see credit given to him for an inspired thought so many years ago.

– **Reg Gale,** Force 10, Lighthorne, Warwicks

Hail the lost destroyers



● *HMS Cavalier, the last operational World War 2 destroyer, in Chatham Historic Dockyard, which will be the backdrop for a new sculpture by Kenneth Potts to commemorate the 142 destroyers and 11,000 lives lost during World War 2*

THE Royal Navy's last operational World War 2 destroyer, HMS Cavalier, is preserved at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, as a memorial to the 142 Royal Navy destroyers and 11,000 men who were lost in WW2.

On November 14 2007, a specially-commissioned monument, sculptured by Kenneth Potts, will be unveiled alongside the ship.

The trustees of the HMS Cavalier (Chatham) Trust and the trustees of the Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust invite those who wish to attend on the day to apply for tickets by registering in advance.

There will be no charge and priority will be given to those who served in World War 2 destroyers and family members of those who lost their lives.

Anyone wishing to register should apply in writing, by September 30, to: Destroyers Memorial Unveiling and Dedication, c/o Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust, The Old Surgery, The Historic Dockyard, Chatham, Kent, ME4 4TZ.

Letters of application must include full contact details with a daytime telephone number; details of personal link with World War 2 destroyers, any relationship to those lost, number of places required and if any are wheelchair users and any other mobility issues.

Alternatively, a registration form is available at www.thedockyard.co.uk.

– **Admiral Sir Ian Garnett,** Chairman, Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust

Cost of ex-pat pensions

FOLLOWING on from Michael Sullivan's letter (August) I was unaware of any charges levied on my Navy pension paid into my bank in France.

When I read this year's newsletter from Xanity Paymaster, I contacted them to ascertain the amount of the charge, after which I decided to revert to payment into my UK bank.

On reading Tim Taylor's reply to Mr Sullivan, I now realise I have been charged all along for overseas payments. I was never informed of this charge and if I had been, I would have thought twice about payment abroad.

Over the two years plus that my pension has been paid in France, I have had a total of £64.05 deducted from my pension at source without my knowledge. I too would question the legality of this.

What chance of reimbursement? How many more pensioners were unaware?

– **Mike Andrews,** Dieppe, France

...THOSE Naval pensioners living abroad and having their monthly pensions paid directly abroad, may not be aware that they are paying considerably for the privilege.

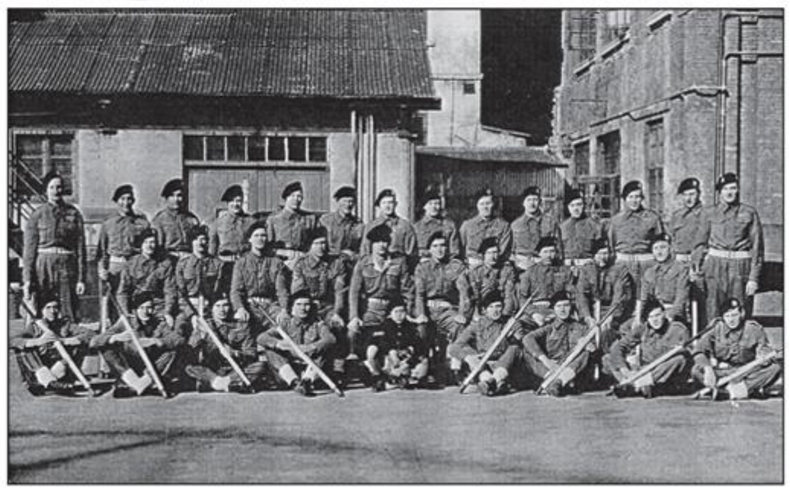
First there is a standing monthly charge of £2.60. Then there is a hidden rate of exchange charge, made by Citibank.

Citibank charge around 1.5%, taken from the commercial rate of exchange, before they transmit the pension. This is a straight profit for them.

The alternative is to have your pension paid in the UK, and to make your own arrangements with a private Internet commercial agency who do not charge anything like as much.

– **Lt Cdr (Ret'd) Ken Napier,** Chairman, RNA Aquitaine Branch, France

Hong Kong memories recalled



...I WOULD like to put the record straight about HMS Swiftsure entering Hong Kong (*Letters*, July), as she entered at the end of August 1945 with HMS Euryalus.

The photo, right, shows the RM detachment from Euryalus in Hong Kong dockyard in September 1945. I am second from the left on the back row.

If anyone recognises themselves, please get in touch.

I have newspaper copies and and a copy of the surrender at Government House. As there are not many of us left, my records will go to the HMS Euryalus Association or to Chatham Historic Dockyard where she was built – the last cruiser and the only Dido-class Cruiser to be built there.

– **K J Taylor,** 26 Cecilia Grove, St Peter's, Broadstairs, Kent CT10 3DE

...I read with interest the letter about HMS Swiftsure entering Hong Kong Harbour in 1945, as I was aboard HMS Maidstone at the time.

We entered the Victoria River under the threat of the 18in gun batteries that were levelled at us, and there were about six Australian corvettes sweeping the channel for Maidstone to enter Hong Kong Harbour.

The Australian corvette HMAS Mildura was in first, but Maidstone was the first British warship to enter amid rifle and machine-gun fire which was still continuing on 30th August 1945.

The main task force was at the time 16 miles astern of us, the captain of Maidstone, Capt Shadwell, a great guy to serve under, took the surrender of Hong Kong on our quarter-deck.

The final surrender came on September 16 1945.

– **S F Tiffin,** Kingston-on-Thames, Surrey

...The Japanese War Memorial was situated on the road leading out of Victoria, en route to Repulse Bay, which I was later to pass many times on recreational swimming parties.

The position was well chosen as you could see it from most viewpoints in Hong Kong. It was on the roadside, but very precarious on the other side down the peak.

Because of this the Royal Engineers had a difficult task in blowing it up, as the debris would fall into dwellings below. But they were successful by laying a charge which just made it fall apart on the chosen spot in late 1946.

– **E Drummond,** Scarcroft, Leeds

...I WAS serving in HM Hospital Ship Oxfordshire when she sailed in with the Task Force to liberate Hong Kong.

We linked up with Task Force 57 which was assembling in Manus with Admiral Cecil Harcourt on the carrier HMS Venerable.

The rest is history as the liberation took place with virtually no problems and our immediate task was to release the PoWs and repatriate them to Australia.

This we did after a slow cruise of some three weeks to acclimatise the patients and fatten them up before reaching civilisation.

– **Harry Mitchell,** Woodpath House, Southsea

Newquay's moving tribute

I AM very sorry that Ian Inskip did not feel valued during Newquay's contribution to the Falklands commemoration (letters, July) but there was more to the day than the events in the harbour and the bay, impressive though they were.

In the evening, St Michael's Church hosted a very moving concert by HMS Raleigh's outstanding Royal Marine Band and two of our local choirs.

Both Cdre Jamie Millar and I spoke, and we focused on the bravery and sacrifices made during the Falklands War.

In addition, on the 10th of June, Newquay's new Mayor, Patrick Lambshead (ex-RAF) dedicated his civic service to remembering the Falklands War and I was very honoured to be asked to preach.

Please rest assured that the sacrifices made by the surviving veterans and the Falklands dead have not been forgotten by the people of Newquay, and we were very honoured to have been asked to contribute to Falklands 25.

– **The Rev Ralph Barber,** Assistant Curate, St Michael's Church, Newquay, Cornwall

opinion

WHAT a revelation HMS Daring is.

No, not just the ship but the media buzz surrounding her.

We have a habit of talking ourselves down in this country – so much so it's a national disease.

We revel in blunders, in things going wrong, in piece of kit X being £Y million over budget and Z years late.

2007 has not been the best of years for the Senior Service's public image, so when the media were invited aboard the most important surface ship in a generation we drew a sharp intake of breath.

Surely they would find something wrong. Too fast. Too slow. Not environmentally friendly enough. Not enough missiles. Too many missiles. Over budget. Under budget. Lack of kit. Too much kit.

If there's a fault to find and an axe to grind, Fleet Street will find it and grind it. But no.

Reporters left the ship visibly impressed. "Daring is mean, green and built for speed," trumpeted one headline. "A warship that can defend the entire city of London," screamed another. "My God, when we make a warship we don't half do it well," gushed one chap, while the US Navy is said to be "gobsmacked" by Daring.

Why the platitudes? Because they saw Daring doing what she can do. They talked to the men and women who built her and who now drive her – and there was no hiding the pride they have in the ship nor their obvious delight that the destroyer to date has surpassed expectations.

The Type 45 project has been protracted. There have been false dawns. But now we have a ship which truly is a world-beater. We can puff our chests, beat our breasts and stamp firmly on the side: Made in Britain.

The views expressed in Navy News *do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Defence*

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● *HMS Brave Swordsman, photographed in 1963 – was 40 knots one of the Royal Navy's fastest run agrounds?*

Life in the fast lane

FURTHER to Michael Padginton's letter requesting details of Brave Borderer breaking her back (August) my photo shows the Brave Swordsman with crew of 1963, shortly before she ran aground off the Barrow Sands at the mouth of the Thames estuary.

We were doing 40 knots (world's fastest run aground?) which was the maximum cruising power. The top speed was 52 knots, rarely used except for visiting dignitaries.

At first we blamed the unreliable Decca Navigator system but in this case the weather was clear and we were out of channel. Had it been anything other than sand, we would, thanks for the fuel mixture, have gone up like a fireball.

We felt a bit ashamed until the tug boat captain told us that during WW2 whilst he was in command of six MTBs he gave the order to turn to starboard and they all ended up high and dry on the same sands!

Faster than the Borderer (always disputed but factually proven) at full throttle she was something to experience at the helm.

These FPBs were a strange format, fast, but the range was only 500 miles, anti-sub detection was dismal, but as fishery protection they were just the job for intercepts.

Maximum time served on one was a year, due to the supposed stress on the body of the constant jarring at high speed.

The crew's quarters were never used at speed unless you belted yourself in your bunk, due to the G-force experienced as the bow lifted.

Torpedo runs were quite successful, held in a Norwegian fjord there was the bonus of an enormous amount of fish being retrieved after the warhead exploded.

I really enjoyed my time on her, but I think they had nowhere to go after what was really an experiment in MTB design.

Fast? The world's fastest warship. Functional? Not really. A great draft? Beyond question.

Best memory? Apart from being the captain of the rifle team that won the FPBS cup against the other NATO nations at Kiel, it was the sight of all these nations leaving harbour at full speed in their MTBs, before we roared past them full throttle up, with the appropriate sign given.

Compared to the other NATO MTBs, we did rule the seas.

– Frank Hagan, Northumberland

Catch that plane

MY father, who died recently, served mainly on carriers, joining the Fleet Air Arm in its infancy.

He often told a story about the procedure to be followed when a plane was landing on deck, which had no hook to catch the arresting cables.

The general idea was: "As soon as the plane touches down, we all rush out and jump on it. That should stop it."

Most people would take that story with a pinch of salt, but while looking through his photograph album I found a picture of the actual event.

– Roy Daine (address supplied)

...In the article 'Home of the AV8ers', you state that the MV-22 is the world's first tilt rotor aircraft.

I remember being at the Farnborough Air Show about 40 years ago and watching the Fairey Roto Dyne take off horizontally and then fly forwards using the same type of engines.

I believed it had been intended to be used as a small passenger aircraft but nothing came of it.

– G A Copson, Hornchurch, Essex

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information.

Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

Given the impressive volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in Navy News.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

Please try to keep your submissions as brief as possible – our space is limited.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.



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Heavyweight effort at Inverness games

THE Tulloch Inverness Highland Games and World Highland Games Championships were to prove an ideal platform for the **City of Inverness** branch to publicise itself and the Association as a whole.

More than 10,000 people attended the two-day event, one of the largest and most prestigious in the Highland Games calendar this year.

The branch borrowed the RNA marquee and display for the weekend and set up to port of the RN and RM recruiting displays, with SSAFA Forces Help next door and the Sea Cadets close to hand as well – and their lively approach certainly gave some clues as to how new recruits can be attracted.

Inverness branch PRO Evan Jessiman said it was also heartening to see the other Services' stalls astern of the Naval contingent – top marks to the organisers!

"We found that this was an ideal opportunity to make people aware that we, the RNA, exist," said S/M Evan.

"We now have several new members and others who now know about the RNA and have expressed an interest.

"For us this was a worthwhile exercise and we will do it again."

S/M Evan added: "Our thanks to RN/RM Recruiting for their help in erecting the tent on Friday night – you saved a couple of potential heart attacks…"

He also thanked all those who helped man the tent, and S/M Bob Coburn, who "arranged virtually everything."



● *Shipmates from the Selsey branch at the local RNLI show – with one of the prized rum tubs made by branch member S/M Mick Robinson*

Selsey's tale of a tub

FOLLOWING the story in *Navy News* of how **Selsey** branch member S/M Mick Robinson made his own ceremonial rum tub, several branches have been in touch to make enquiries about obtaining a tub of their own.

Branch secretary S/M Brian Hall said: "Mick made the one for Selsey by hand – a long and tedious task.

"However, if there is sufficient interest Mick has said he would be prepared to go into production and manufacture others.

"Any branch interested should apply in writing to me, and price estimates will be given once we have some idea of numbers."

Contact S/M Hall at Lauriston, 39 Hillfield Road, Selsey, West Sussex PO20 0LB

Historian dies after car crash

A leading member of the Naval historical fraternity has died following a car crash.

Allan Hall (68) was the editor of the Naval Historical Collectors and Research Association's quarterly journal.

A former Merchant Navy and RFA officer, Allan was a prominent medal collector and dealer, and was involved in the Seas Cadet Corps, particularly with TS Stirling in Birmingham, the naval book publishing industry and numerous other bodies such as the Fleet Air Arm Museum and Royal Naval Museum.

Allan's last journal was a special edition devoted to the 25th anniversary of the Falklands War.

Association vice president Richard Cornish said: "Allan's death was a severe shock to us all and a great loss to the naval medal collecting and associated fraternity."

He praised the high standards Allan had brought to the journal, and added: "Our hearts go out to Denise, his widow, and their family in this time of great sadness."

Tribute to the tot

IN THE interests of authenticity, some quantity of Pusser's rum had to be consumed by 120 shipmates and guests at the **March** branch Tot Commiseration Day.

Following a short service, a loyal toast (in rum, naturally) was proposed by chairman S/M Bill Barry, then the VIP guests took centre stage.

Admiral Sir Chatteris-Bligh (aka S/M Dick Mandley) inspected the guard – who were in 19th Century rig – making rude and unnecessary comments and wafting a handkerchief to disperse the noxious odour of the hoi-polloi.

His Flag Officer, Lt Ponsonby-Eastwood (aka S/M Brian Eastwood), carried a clipboard to record the names of those who offended the admiral.

The genuine guest of honour was the Deputy Mayor of March, Cllr Trevor Quince, and branches represented at the event included **City of Ely, Soham, Wisbech, Peterborough** and one dedicated soul made it all the way from **Kettering**.

Better late than never…

THEY say time flies, but **Chichester** branch have managed to lose a decade somewhere.

Branch chairman S/M Jim Austin has been presented with the branch's golden jubilee certificate – ten years late.

The certificate was passed to the Area 3 National Council member S/M Peter Reed at the Annual Conference in Torquay in June, upon which it was discovered that the certificate should have been presented in 1997.

around the branches

MEMBERS of **Adelaide** celebrated the 20th anniversary of the formation of the South Australian branch with a lunch at Naval House.

Some 60 shipmates turned up to reminisce about past activities, aided by a wall display of photos.

Am anniversary cake was cut by chairman S/M Eric Davis and the maker of the cake, Margaret Dolphin.

THE **Orkney** branch is due to commission on October 6, and with the Royal Navy's long association with Scapa Flow it promises to be a special event.

It is hoped that branches would wish to be represented at the occasion, but as the travel and logistics are likely to be complicated, early booking and arrangements are advised.

For more information contact S/M David Hughes on 01856 873492.

ALL bids for Royal Marines Band engagements for the period April 2008 to March 2009 must reach HQRM by October 1.

Branches seeking a band should request an application form from RNA HQ, to be returned to them no later than September 21.

Priority will be given to branches holding standard dedications.

DORCHESTER branch has taken part in the annual Alexandra Rose Day, where money is raised for various charities supporting disabled people, the young and the elderly.

Started in 1912 to mark the 50th anniversary of the arrival of Queen Alexandra in the UK from Denmark, the charity's flag day took the form of selling artificial wild roses.

The day's proceeds were shared between the Friends of Digby Court (a residential and respite home for children with severe learning disabilities), the Dorset Association for the Disabled, the alexandra Rose Day's Special Appeal Fund and the Dorchester branch.

UXBRIDGE branch have awarded Cllr Jill Rhodes, of Hillingdon Borough Council, honorary membership for her outstanding support and help to the branch.

President S/M Henry Avery presented the certificate to Cllr Rhodes at the branch's monthly meeting in August.

THERE was more than one family link when **York** branch member S/M Margaret Pawson visited HMS York to check on the progress of granddaughter Shelley.

For Shelley's grandfather – Margaret's husband – served on board the World War 2 cruiser HMS York, so AB Pawson, a former York Sea Cadet, was very pleased to find the destroyer was her first sea draft.

Margaret joined the Type 42 warship for a day at sea from Newcastle to Whitby during the City of York affiliates day.

SHIPMATES taking part in the Association's Biennial Parade on September 9 in Whitehall are reminded of the importance of a smart and well-turned-out appearance.

Members should read *The Guide to Ceremonial*, paragraphs 105 and 105A, with regard correct rig and head dress.

Parade Marshals may request any member whose dress, bearing or conduct is likely to bring discredit on the Association to leave the parade.

New career at sea for ex-sailor

A LIFE member of the Association has taken up a new career at sea – at the age of 76.

Tom Robson, of **Darlington**, has been signed up to lecture on cruise ships on various aspects of maritime history.

His subjects will include the history of boy service in the RN, Boy Seaman John Travers Cornwell VC, 'the truth about the mutiny on the Bounty', and the Battle of Jutland.

Tom has been delivering lectures based on his book *Boy Seaman RN* for years, and he is keen to highlight the service and contribution of 15-year-olds who enlisted as Boy Ratings over the past 200 years.

Tom himself enlisted in the RN at the age of 15 in 1947, signing on for 15 years, and is the author of a second book, *The Lad From Durham*, which is autobiographical.

His *Boy Seaman RN* book has gone to all parts of the world, including Buckingham Palace, the Imperial War Museum and the Commander-in-Chief's library at the HQ of the Admiral of the Pacific Fleet in Hawaii.

Education departments in Hampshire and Portsmouth also use it as a reference book.

The author has links to several ex-boy associations, including HMS Ganges, HMS St Vincent, HMS Impregnable, and is president of the HMS Bruce Boys Association.

As well as being a life member of the RNA, he is also life president of his local club, and is a member of several ex-ship associations.

He was recently awarded the insignia of Company Commander in the US Navy at the Training Command HQ in Florida

Well done all!

THE Public Relations Officer of **Gloucester** branch has written to *Navy News* to pass on thanks to sailors for helping during recent floods.

"We want to thank the personnel of HMS Ocean, HMS Northumberland and Devonport Naval Base, as most of our members were either flooded or lost fresh water and power," said S/M Terry Brain.

"It was most heartening to see the sterling work being down by these ratings – we will never be able to thank you enough, and I think I can speak for the city as well as our members.

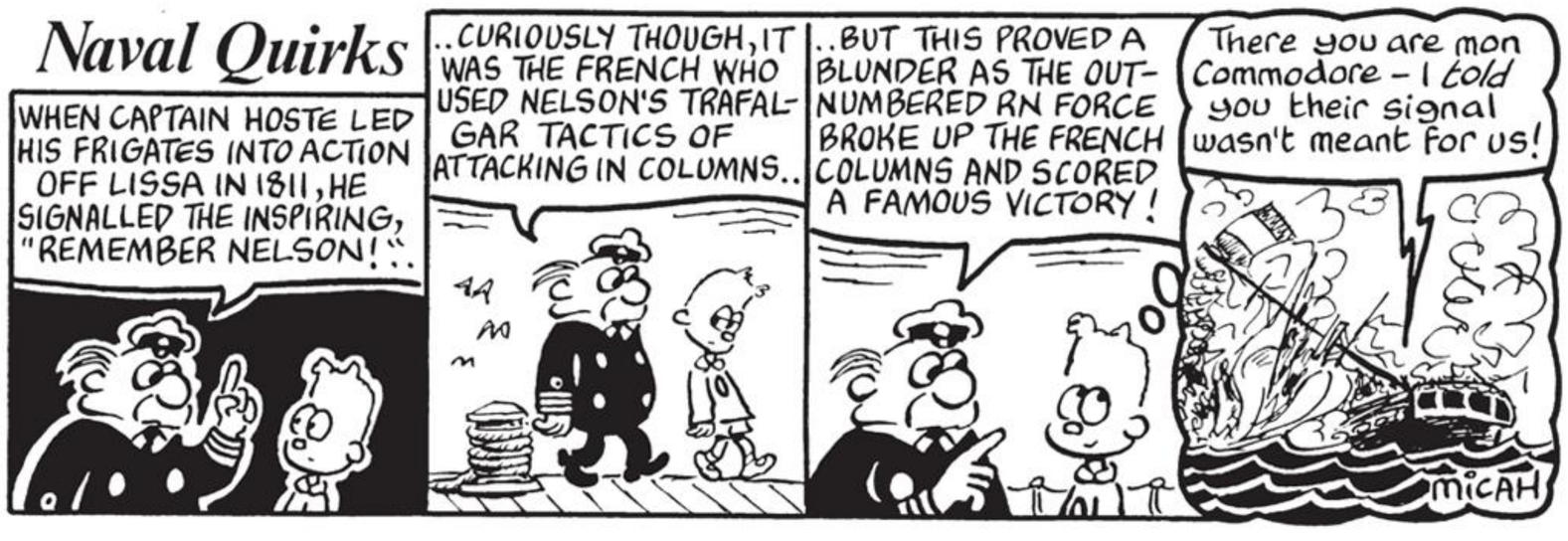
"Well done all!"

Around 140,000 homes in the region were without fresh water for a two-week period in July when a treatment works was flooded, and electricity supplies were also cut off as sub-stations were threatened and for safety reasons as homes were submerged.

After the 100 sailors arrived to help defend two power plants from floodwaters, a further 100 personnel were sent from RNAS Yeovilton as the crisis deepened – and their efforts succeeded.



Naval Quirks





● *An 87-year-old veteran of the Arctic and Malta Convoys has made his own contribution to the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade by reproducing a famous episode – in a bottle. Bill Gregor, of Bristol, has made his own version of HMS Black Joke chasing the Spanish slaver El Almirante (above) using a contemporary illustration (inset top left) as his guide*

Swiss branch seeks membership boost

THE fledgling **Swiss** branch of the Association is launching a drive to recruit more members – particularly from parts of the country which are under-represented.

Branch chairman S/M Nick Anastasi said the main problem was that membership was currently concentrated in the west (French) part of the country, while shipmates were thin on the ground in the eastern (German) part.

S/M Nick said the Royal British Legion got around the problem by organising a lunch with the British Resident Association around Remembrance Sunday, at which he was a guest speaker two years ago.

He would like to see the RNA doing something similar – but in order to ensure its success, he would need to recruit members in that neck of the woods.

The branch is also organising a number of events in the coming weeks to ensure that the Association's profile remains in the public eye.

On September 12 an autumn drinks party will be staged at the Swiss French Agricultural Machinery Museum in Gingins.

Wines will be local, and S/M Peter Morgan will provide nibbles from his British delicatessen in Basel.

The branch's third Trafalgar Dinner will be held at the Nautique, the restaurant of the Nyon Sailing Club on the shore of Lake Geneva, on October 20.

Guest speaker that night will be one of those fabled creatures – a Swiss mariner.

He is Commander of the Swiss Army No 10 Motorboat Company – the Swiss have nine military patrol boats operating on the lakes in support of police and border guards.

And on December 5 the Nautique is again the venue for a raclette party – raclette is a variation on the fondue theme, both Swiss culinary customs.

Anyone interested in joining the Swiss branch of the RNA should contact S/M Nick at Villa Tamigi, 34, rue du Village, CH-1274 GRENS, tel +41 (022) 3619491 or fax +41 (022) 3619519.



● *Standards on parade at Beccles branch's Silver Jubilee service*

Silver service for Beccles

BECCLES branch has celebrated its silver jubilee at a special combined church service which also celebrated Sea Sunday.

More than 80 people gathered at the Priory Church of St Michael and St Felix in the Suffolk village of Rumburgh for a service conducted by branch padre S/M Michael Leigh-Pearson.

Among those present were Area 5 chairman S/M Janet King, the Deputy Mayor and Mayoress of Beccles, Mr and Mrs Chris Punt, Beccles branch president S/M Richard Ling, branch chairman S/M Ted Thompson and branch vice president S/M Percy Kent – one of the original six who signed the commissioning certificate in 1982.

The church was beautifully decorated for the occasion with flowers, including the three-masted sailing ship situated by the font and a display in the sanctuary.

Sea cadets from the Beccles unit TS Brave acted as Sidesmen for the occasion.

After the welcome, and during the first hymn, six standards were paraded to the altar rail and placed in the sanctuary – those of Beccles, Area 5, the National Standard of the **RN Patrol Service**, the **Fleet Air Arm Association (Great Yarmouth)**, the **Royal Marines Association** and the **Royal British Legion**.

The Rt Rev Eric Devenport, former Bishop of Dunwich, gave the address, in which he recalled his time at HMS Royal Arthur and "how delightful the CPOs were – so kind and understanding; a collection of fine gentlemen, never to be forgotten…"

Cathedral service

ELY Cathedral was the setting for the 20th anniversary celebrations staged by the City of Ely branch.

The ceremony took place during an evensong service at the Norman cathedral which was led by the Dean.

Strong links with the cathedral have been forged during the two decades – and one member of the branch, S/M Peter Walker, is a former Bishop of Ely.

After the service there was a certain amount of liquid refreshment – especially as it was coming up to the branch 'tot commiseration' day at the end of July.

At one point in proceedings the branch secretary piped on S/M Peter's bosun's call – a call, branch members were reliably informed, had been used by the Duke of Edinburgh himself.

Respects paid to VC hero

A GROUP of shipmates have paid their respects to an almost-forgotten Victoria Cross hero in **York**.

Bombardier Thomas Wilkinson won his VC at Sevastopol in the Crimea in June 1855, at the age of 24

S/M Bernard Hallas, PRO for the RMs and RNA in the city, said: "Bdr Wilkinson left his small house in the town centre.

"He had enlisted in the Royal Marine Artillery and as soon as he had finished his training he was on his way to the Crimea in defence of our empire.

"It was there that he performed the act or acts of gallantry that was rewarded by his Sovereign pinning upon his chest, amongst other medals, the plain crimson ribbon of the Victoria Cross – the highest honour in the land.

"He came home and, for a short time, was a local hero.

"Working in the stonemason's yard adjacent to the Minster, the dust did him no favours and he died as a comparatively young man with a lung disease.

"His grave, situated in York cemetery, marked with a granite headstone in the form of a Victoria Cross – donated by his comrades in the Royal Marines – lies undisturbed and rarely visited except for a very few veterans of today."

The group which attended the ceremony was led by Col David Shallow MC RM, and held a short but poignant service at the graveside.

The sound of bugles playing the *Last Post* and *Reveille*, and appropriate hymns, were the veterans' way of "paying tribute to all heroes – passed but not forgotten," according to S/M Hallas.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our July edition (right) was HMS Abdiel, pennant number N21.

The £50 prize for the correct answer goes to D F Trigger of Tavistock, in Devon.

This month's ship (above) was the first of three RFA vessels which transferred to the US Military Sealift Command in the 1980s.

We want to know her RFA name, and the name she assumed under the Stars and Stripes. The right answers could win you £50.

Complete the coupon and send it to Mystery Picture, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth PO1 3HH.



Coupons giving correct answers will go into a prize draw to establish a winner.

Closing date for entries is October 12. More than one entry can be submitted, but photocopies cannot be accepted. Do not include anything else in your envelope: no correspondence can be entered into and no entry returned.

The winner will be announced in our November edition. The competition is not open to Navy News employees or their families.

MYSTERY PICTURE 151

Name

Address

.....

.....

My answers

.....

Double 25 at Newark

NEWARK branch has celebrated its silver jubilee at the RAF Association Club in the town.

The Mayor and Mayoress of Newark, Cllr and Mrs Bryan Richardson, were guests of honour, along with **Area 9** president S/M George Holmes and Area chairman and National Council member S/M Keith Crawford.

S/Ms Bas and Robert Spurr, both founder members, were among more than 70 Newark members who attended, along with members of **Mansfield** and **Bingham** branches.

S/M Les Fletcher was presented with Life Membership for 25 years continual membership, during which he has served as secretary, vice chairman and social secretary.

D-Boat reunion at Nelson

MEMBERS of the **D-Boats Association** were granted £10,000 from the Lottery Fund to hold a Silver Jubilee reunion at HMS Nelson.

Almost 150 shipmates from the World War 2 Defender-class and 1950s Daring-class destroyers descended on Portsmouth for ceremonial and social events, including a memorial service at the Southsea war memorial and a march-past at Nelson, the salute being taken by Cdr Ian Buckel, who will serve in the new Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless.

When it came to socialising, there were some poignant reunions.

Mike Smith (68), from Norfolk, met up with old shipmate Roy Nunn from Essex – they last met 51 years ago when they both served in HMS Diamond.

Another Norfolk man, 73-year-old Bob Dack, from Downham Market, last saw his old shipmate Roy Goodwin, from Kent, 54 years ago in HMS Defender.

For information about the Association contact Mike Smith at 206 Main Road, Clenchwarton, PE34 4AA, tel 01553 765530 or email dboats@tiscali.co.uk

Busy schedule

REDRUTH and Camborne branch have had a busy couple of months, attending Falklands anniversary parades, the 60th anniversary of the opening of HMS Seahawk and the Sea Sunday parade at Falmouth.

The two Standard Bearers were also at Lands End to greet Jane Allen after her six-week walk from John o'Groats, raising funds for the RBL Poppy Appeal.

The Royal Naval Association

Once Navy Always Navy

Unity, Loyalty, Patriotism and Comradeship

Who can join?

- Full Members
 Serving and Ex-Service members of RN, RM, QARNNS, WRNS, Reserves RFA and RNXS
- Associate members
 Others in sympathy with our objects especially families

What does the Association do?

We:

- Support the Royal Navy
- Maintain Naval traditions
- Enjoy social activities
- Re-unite shipmates
- Remember the fallen
- Help the disabled
- Look after the needy
- Cheer up the distressed
- Stand together in unity

How to join

Write to RNA HQ
82 Chelsea Manor Street
London SW3 5QJ
Tel: 020 7352 6764
Fax: 020 7352 7385
www.royal-naval-association.co.uk



NOTICEBOARD

Ask Jack

HMS Alecto and HMS Varbel: Seeking information on 1st class stoker Alfred Franks from Stockton on Tees. He served in Alecto 1941-43 and Varbel 1943-45. His son Peter Franks would like to know of his father's war service and service pals. Contact Rev Peter Franks at alan@rnascar.fsnet.co.uk or tel: 01723 515256 or write to 28 Fir Tree Drive, Filey, North Yorkshire, YO14 9EL.

Chitral: James is writing the second edition of *My War at Sea* and is anxious to get hold pf photographs of the P&O Liner Chitral and the Anchor Donaldson Liner Athenia, the latter sunk by U30 in the early hours after the outbreak of WW2 in 1939. The loan of photographs would be acknowledged in the credits of those who have assisted. Any costs will be paid and photographs returned. Contact James Fisher, 24 Sherbourne Drive, Woodley, Reading, Berks, RG5 4QY.

HMS Duncan: Does anyone know of an association for this ship? If so contact Tom Sawyer at roland.sawyer@btinternet.com or tel: 01653 628171.

HMS Erin: While aboard Erin, James Colgan, a stoker petty officer, received burns to his face and arms from which he died eight days later aboard hospital ship Drina in the River Forth. Is anyone able to fill in the details for me? Contact Isobel Muir at isobel-muir@ntlworld.com or write to 68 Kermoor Avenue, Bolton, BL1 7HN.

HMS Excalibur: Peter is seeking information about his father, Stephen Murray, a ship's cook. He served in Excalibur, Drake, Paris, Tyne, Osprey and many more. Later he went into the Merchant Navy and then the Fire Brigade at Merseyside. He died in the mid 60s. If you served with or remember Stephen, please contact his son Peter Murray at petermurray1953@aol.co.uk or tel: 0151 726 0719.

George S Grant: Seeking information about George S Grant (Glenfarclas, Scotland) born 1923 and died 2002, and the ships he served in for his grandchildren. We know he was in Taormino, Sicily, in August 1946 when he was returning to Malta. He was also in Alexandria at some time. Contact Pamela Sanderson on 01606 882003 or write to 1 Chapel Bank, Mill Lane, Cuddington, Cheshire, CW8 2TA.

RN Medals: Following a recent bereavement many RN Medals have emerged and the inheritor would like to reunite them with the person they were awarded to or the next of kin: Stoker S W Gordon, Lt Cdr J N E Gilespy RNR, Rear Admiral C W Round-Turner, E Butcher RNR, W H Morgan, D H J P Linsell, RH Butcher RNR and T Lancaster RMLI. Ray also has an interest in WW2 carriers and is always on the lookout for memorabilia, models or books. He wonders if anyone has the same interest? Contact Ray Spence, Lisburn, Co. Antrim at rmpmonkeys@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 07719 677567.

Eric Mortimore: I'm looking for information about my dad. His name was Eric Mortimore and he served with the Royal Navy from 1934 to 1947. He was a Wireless Telegraphist. I know that he saw action on the Yangtze River in 1937. He was involved in the Russian Convoys and also served in the Mediterranean – possibly at sea, definitely on shore (Ras-el-Tin W/T Station, Alexandria). He was also involved in the surrender of Japanese POW camps in 1945, aboard either/or HMS Caesar or Caprice. I have details of the ships on which he served, if required. I'm really hoping that someone who served with dad may remember him and be able to tell me more. Contact Penny Tomalin (nee Mortimore) at tomalins@ntlworld.com or write to PO Box 1196, Putnoe, Bedford, MK41 8WZ.

HMS Ramilies: Ray has in his possession a bronze-type medal inscribed, HMS Ramilies Marathon 1925, the reverse side shows two marathon runners. He was wondering if anyone could throw any light on the history of this event, or anyone had any family connections to this event. Contact Ray Corbitt at rj.corbitt@ntlworld.com or tel: 01706 290687.

Arthur Sidney Robinson: Looking for any photos and information about my grandfather Arthur Sidney Robinson, son of Sidney Robinson (also a war veteran), who served as a chef or steward during WW2. Would like to identify photos taken of him aboard a ship with a war buddy Bill Foster. We do not know what ship, but it is believed he enlisted and/or embarked from Queensland. He was said to have forged his passport and was aboard a ship which served in waters off an Indonesian island or around Papua New Guinea. He later served as a Private under a seperate campaign. Any information would be appreciated. Contact Rebekah Blackwolf-Mitchell at lady_azurewolf@yahoo.co.uk or write to PO BOX 4248, Ringwood, Victoria, 3134, Australia.

Naval Party 1810: Seeking anyone who served in Naval Party 1810, Stena Seaspread during Falklands conflict. Contact Ian Logan at icl49@btinternet.com or tel: 0187 561 0399.

HMS Templar: My late brother-in-law, Fred Barnes, served in submarine Templar during World War 2. Can anyone supply me with details of the boat's exploits and the area it operated in? Contact Laurie Debona at laurie.debona@tesco.net or tel: 01622 763740 or write to 49 Castle Road, Allington, Maidstone, Kent, ME16 0PP

HMS Victory: Seeking anyone who knew Frederick James Ruff during his Naval service. For the most part he was at HMS Victory I, II & III, and for short periods at Excellent, Paragon, Naden – at the invasion of Sicily in 1943, HMS Cormorant, HMS Wishart, Gibraltar. His best man in 1940 was Sydney Eden. Please contact Frederick Ruff, 8 Claypiece Road, Withywood, Bristol, BS13 9DP or tel: 0117 908 2535.

Williams: Searching for the Naval history of my husband's late uncle William Gerald Williams (know as Gerald). We have photos of him in his naval uniform. He came from Maria Street, Neath. We would like to have contact with anyone who knew him and could give information on his service history. Contact Mrs Elizabeth Williams at liz.williams1963@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 01792 812374 or write to 53 Dynevor Road, Skewen, Neath, SA10 6TW.

Deaths

Marine James Harding RM. Armoured Support Company. Aged 21 as the result of a road traffic accident. May 20.

Lance Corporal Michael Peter Jones RM. Killed in action in Afghanistan. Joined the Royal Marines aged 18 in February 1999. His CO described him as truly exceptional, "the best at his level, who unflinchingly stood, time after time, shoulder to shoulder with his friends in the very worst of conditions. He will be remembered as a genuine and loyal friend whose selfless bravery is an example to us all." July 29. Aged 26.

CPOWEM R Stephen James. DESISS, St Vincent. Joined Royal Navy in 1980. Ships and units included: Cardiff, Tamar, Drake, DCSA Comms, Manly, Collingwood, Defiance FMB, Beaver, Raleigh, Forest Moor, Brazen, RNSLAM, FOST, RN Gibraltar and Illustrious. August 7.

Capt 'Pug' Mather. Joined the RN as a special entry cadet in 1946 in training cruiser Frobisher and engineering training at Keyham, Devonport. Served in Implacable, Scorpion and Swiftsure. Trained as a fighter pilot at RAF Syerston flying Percival Prentice trainers, then 802 NAS in Ocean 1952. He was a member of 801 NAS flying a Hawker Sea Fury from Glory which was struck by flak and blew up, he was thrown from the cockpit but managed to release his parachute; imprisoned and tortured for months, was awarded the Queen's Commendation for Brave Conduct; repatriated to Glory in 1954. Exchange service with the US Navy at San Diego, California; senior air engineer at RNAS Culdrose and air engineer officer of the Albion 1966-68; naval and air attaché in Athens 1975-77. Represented the RN at tennis, squash and rugby and retired 1983. July 14. Aged 79.

Jim 'Happy' Day. PO PTI. Served 1949-58 at Ganges, Pembroke, Victory, Caledonia, Burley (Lochinvar) and in HMS Wilton, Belfast and Birmingham. Nore Command RN PTI Association, former President of Blackheath and Bromley Harriers Athletic Club. July 1. Aged 74.

Ian Smithen. Chief Engine Room Artificer (Apprentice Series 17). Served 1953-78 Fisgard, Caledonia, Vanguard, Undine, Rocket, Dolphin, Aisne, Ulster, Maxton, Gurkha, Yarmouth and Droxford. Fisgard Association. July 12.

William Hough. Able Seaman. Served in Russian Convoys. HMS Opportune Association and 17th Destroyer Association. July 18.

John Jackson. AB. Served 1951-75. HMS Newfoundland 1955-56 and a member of the association. Also served Largo Bay, Vanguard, Lowestoft, Jaguar, RNH Haslar, Vernon, Dryad, Ganges and Victorious. Aged 72. July 20.

George Rigby. AB. Served 1939-46. HMS Newfoundland 1942-45 and a member of the association. Also served Drake and Golden Hind. July 15. Aged 94.

David Balkam. AB. Served 1953-65. HMS Newfoundland 1956-58, and a member of the association. Also served in Charity, Petard, Beachampton, Striker, Orion, Layburn, and Lofoten. July 25. Aged 71.

Lt Cdr Peter John Dixon RD RNVR. Served in Mohawk and later as a watch keeping officer in Valiant, HMS Lulworth as 1st Lt in 1943 and Gorleston (Colombo), two of the ten cutters transferred to the RN in 1941 from the US Coast Guard. Co-founder and chairman of the Cutters Association. July 9. Aged 92.

Allan Hall. Merchant Navy and RFA officer. Editor for the past nine years of the *Naval Historical Collectors and Research Association*'s quarterly journal. Orders and Medals Research Society and a world-renowned expert on the subject. July. Aged 68.

Norman Leece. A/M. Served 808 Squadron in HMS Khedive 1944 (Far East). July 25.

David James Earp. Telegraphist. Duke of York Association; also served in HMS Devonshire. July 16. Aged 80.

R G 'Graham' Clarke. Cd Pilot, FAA. Flew Fireflies with 23 Flight of 812 NAS (Korea), HMS Glory 1951-52. 14th Carrier Air Group Association. August 4.

Edwin Ernest James Townsend. PO A/Fitter 'A'. 1833 NAS FAA. Served 1940-46 in various carriers and bases. HMS Illustrious Association. May 2. Aged 86.

Ethel Needham. With her late husband Wallace, almost wholly responsible for the inception, running and organisation of the Old Illustrious Association from before its foundation 1983 to late 1987. Life member. April 27.

Stephen Houghland. PO/OE. Served 1966-77 at Ganges, Triumph (Singapore) then submarines including Alliance, Artemis and Oberon. March 20. Aged 56.

Jimmy Stewart. L/Stoker. HMS Cheviot 1950 and member of association. May.

William 'Bill' Ward. AB. Served HMS Glasgow, Whitesand Bay, Sulva, Cleopatra, Nightingale, Vanguard, Sheffield and AFD 22. HMS Bruce Association. August 6.

Jack Nixon. Shipwright. Enlisted at age 17 and served in many ships and bases including Collingwood, Victory, Queen Elizabeth and Quebec. Queen Elizabeth Association. July 19. Aged 84.

Ray 'Bunker' Hill. CPO(OEA). Served 1952-74 in Illustrious, Ajax, Daring, Diomede, Fisgard 57-59, Malta 59-62 and Cambridge; MoD armament depot Ernesettle. July 25. Aged 75.

Ruth Stone. QARNNS Matron. Served 1947-77 RNH Maine (Korean War), Malta, Gibraltar, Yeovilton, Portsmouth, Plymouth and London. Korean Veterans Association, Gloucester branch. July 31. Aged 84.

E M 'Mary' Morgan (Mrs Mary Southall). L/Wren. Served two and a half years at Bletchley Park decrypting Enigma messages. July 24. Aged 82.

L E Chard. LST and Landing Craft Association. Served on board LCG(M) 118, and LCTs 945, 979, 1070, 1172 and 1179. July 14.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION

Edward John Williams. Nuneaton branch. June 30. Aged 78.

Eric Hedley Ashton. Llandudno branch. Joined RN 1939 served for six years in HMS Hornet 11th MTB Flotilla, MTBs and MGBs, Malta, Norway and HMS Warrior as Chief Engineering Officer. Commissioned 1942. Member of MTBs Trust. April 11.

Sidney Ernest Drewett. CPO(SB). President Chichester branch. Joined 1936 served 12 years in HMS Scorpion, flagship of Yangtze Squadron then HMS Kedah; also RM Beach Engineers. Returned to Far East in 1945 and lost an eye from Japanese shrapnel on the Malay Peninsula. July 18. Aged 92.

Arthur Henry 'Dave' Davis. Mech 1. Engine Room. Served 1947-60 in Leeds Castle, Broadsword, Virago, Solebay, Centaur and Redoubt. Founder member of Uxbridge branch.

Walter 'Wally' Bowd Fuller. Soham and district branch. Ships include Pretoria Castle, Sheffield and Neave. June 22. Aged 80.

Maurice Wood. A/PO. Served 1948-58 as a telegrapher in Ganges, Howe, Onslaught, Tenacious, Zambesi, Oppossum, Consort and HMY Britannia. Founder member and secretary of Knowle branch. June 1.

John Dixon. Served in Ganges, Royal Arthur, Hengist and Cheviot (Yangtze clasp). Secretary and founder member Salford branch for 25 years, chairman Area 10 and HMS London 1947-49 Association. Served on a number of committees connected with the RN. July 9. Aged 76.

Peter James Blackmore. Steward. Served 1957-66 in Victory, Ceres, Dolphin, Victorious, Heron, Carron, Ganges and Bulwark. Vice chairman Swaffham branch. July 19. Aged 68.

Les Guest. Leading Air Mechanic (Ordnance). Atherton branch. Served from 1940-46 in Trumpeter and Tracker. Russian Convoys Association and president of the Atherton branch Royal British Legion. July 29. Aged 84.

Hannan 'Pat' Bridgman. CPO Wren 1940-46 in Goldcrest. Life member Sleaford branch. July. Aged 94.

Ken Thompson. Signalman. Bolton branch. Served in Royal Arthur, Chatham Barracks, St Angelo, Grilse, Eskimo and Circe. August 1. Aged 84.

A McArdle. Birkenhead 'Thornbury' branch. July.

E Duckworth. Birkenhead 'Thornbury' branch. July.

Ron Nolan. Telegraphist. Horley branch. Served WW2 mainly on Atlantic and Russian operations.

Raymond Henry Bragg. PO Stoker. Served 1943-47. Life member, life vice president and past chairman and standard bearer of Whitehaven and district branch. Algerines Association. July 17. Aged 82.

Dudley Raymond Kearn. MAA. Canberra. Joined Ganges 1940. Served in HMS Queen Elizabeth (onboard when she was mined in Alexandria by Italian frogman in 1941), Glasgow, Birmingham, Renown, Ceylon, Victorious (Master at Arms), Kent (Master at Arms) and Scarborough. August 9 in Canberra Australia.

ASSOCIATION OF RN OFFICERS

Lt Cdr R Bannar-Martin DSC. Served: Malaya, Tuna, Viking, Forth, Auriga, Camperdown, Duncansby Head, Myngs, Sheffield, Excellent, Dolphin, Osprey and submarines Splendid and Superb.

Lt Cdr J M Bradley. Served: London, Templar, Trafalgar, Seraph, Sea Scout and Truelove.

Capt R N Devlin. Served: Norfolk, Excellent, President and Tiger.

Rear Adm A S George. Served: Bermuda, Victorious, President, Hampshire, Osprey and Nelson.

Capt R H Graham DSC. Served: Orion, Gallant, Troubridge, Sussex, Vanguard, Redpole, Saker, Britannia, Protector, Fife and Dryad.

Lt R H 'Roy Harry' Graham. Served: Peregrine, Victorious, Fisgard and Ariel.

Lt Cdr R C Henley. Served: Bedouin, Montgomery, Leeds, Verdun, Ajax, Wren and Forth.

Capt D G Mather. Served: Saker, Seahawk, Albion and Daedalus.

Rear Adm R W Mayo. Served: Tamar, Medway, Tyne, Aberdeen, Chevron, Theseus, St Angelo, Dolphin, Osprey and Cochrane.

S/Lt C G McCracken. Served: Melbourne and Dryad.

Lt Cdr W F N Tolfree. Served: Indomitable, Cockade, President and Gambia.

Lt C P Tottle. Served: Bulwark, Alaric and Ocelot.

Lt R E West. Served: Pembroke, Cumberland, Bugloss, Sheba, Barfoot, Uplifter, Abercrombie, Wild Goose, Thunderer, Gambia, Kenya, Orion, Neptune, Sheba, Vidal and Jaguar.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION

R 'Rawden' Banner-Martin DSC. Medway Towns. Served 1942-47 in Tuna, L23, Splendid, H44, Viking and Auriga. Aged 87.

W C 'Bill' Binns. ERA. Merseyside. Served 1941-46 in Usurper, Sea Rover, Sturdy, Springer and Satyr. Aged 85.

R 'Ron' Cant. AB Radar. Dolphin. Served 1943-46 in Ursula, P614 and Taurus. Aged 82.

H 'Jock' Niven. LEM. New Zealand. Served 1964-68 in Ambush, Alliance, Andrew, Anchorite, Amphion (64-66) and Tabard (67-68). Aged 66.

P 'Pete' Raithby. PO RE. Nottingham. Served 1952-57 in Astute, Thorough, Tactician and Turpin. Aged 79.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION

Arthur Lewis. Stoker. Served in Espiegle. July 9. Aged 85.

George Heritage. Shipwright. Served in Clinton. July 10. Aged 82.

Geoff Entwistle. Ldg/Wtr. Served in Mariner and Lennox. July 18. Aged 72.

Raymond Bragg. PO(MM)L. Served in Coquett and Truelove. July 24. 82.

Sports lottery

July 14: £5,000 – **S/Lt G E Ridley**, RAF Cranwell; £1,500 – **Lt A J Sawaki**, RNAS Yeovilton; £500 – **CPO NN L Ausby**, RCDM.

July 21: £5,000 – **POAEM(L) S B Latchford**, 845 NAS Yeovilton; £1,500 – **SA1 J M Ewing**, HMS Vengeance (P); £500 – **CPOMEA M A French**, HMS Cumberland.

July 28: VW Polo – **PO(C) M Wilde**, MCM1; £1,500 – **Capt S D Orr RM**, RMR London; £500 – **Lt R P Carnell**, Op Telic.

August 4: £5,000 – **Mne D R J Bone RM**, 40 Cdo RM; £1,500 – **LCT L T Rooney**, JSSU Cheltenham; £500 – **OMW2 D G O'Leary**, HMS Illustrious.

August 11: £5,000 – **LWEA S Roberts**, HMS Albion; £1,500 – **AET2 A C Iggo**, 824 NAS Culdrose; £500 – **AEAAPP G M Morgan**, 702 NAS Yeovilton.

Swap drafts

ABLogs(Pers) Coo. Draft: HMS Ark Royal, current. **Will swap for:** any Portsmouth-based ship. **Contact:** BFPO 212 or 07929 281996.

ABSea1 Hallis. Draft: HMS Chatham, current. **Will swap for:** any Portsmouth AB-Sea1 draft, sea or shore based. **Contact:** h_hallis1889@hotmail.co.uk.

Logs(SC) Parkin. Draft: HMS Chatham, deploying to the Med in Sept. **Will swap for:** any Type 23 deploying. **Contact:** 9375 52570.

Entries for the Deaths' column and Swap Drafts in October's Noticeboard must be received by **September 12**

Reunions

SEPTEMBER 2007

8th Destroyer Squadron Association: 18th annual reunion at the Spa Complex, Scarborough, September 7-9. Details from Peter Lee-Hale at Pleehale@aol.com or tel: 01249 811405.

Fleet Air Arm Field Gun Association: Reunion at the Royal Court Hotel, Coventry, September 14-16. All ex-FAA Fieldgunners are welcome. Further details from association secretary, Jimmy Edwards, on 01329 664007.

HMS Royal Arthur, Corsham: Reunion on September 29. Staff senior rates and officers from 1979 to 1984 are invited. For details contact Jim Ryder at jimryder@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01452 534601.

Singapore Schools: A reunion for pupils of all British Forces schools in Singapore is to be held at the Ramada Jarvis Hotel in Hatfield, on September 29. Please look at http://www.singas.co.uk for ticket details, or e-mail singaporeschool.reunion@googlemail.com if interested. Pupils are mostly service children, whose fathers were in Singapore at any time. As a lot of service children went on to join the forces themselves, perhaps some readers were at school there.

OCTOBER 2007

HMS Vanguard (Battleship): Reunion at the Astor Hotel, Plymouth on October 5-7. All ex-shipmates from any commission are welcome. Information from D R Scrivener, 70 Beach Road, Fleetwood, FY7 8PN.

HMS Norfolk: The 2007 Old Norfolks association reunion dinner will take place on October 13 at 7pm at the Quality Inn, Plymouth. Details and booking form from Ken Moth, 28 Greenside Drive, Lostock Green, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 7SR.

Weapons Mechanicians Association: Reunion October 26-27 at the Bear Hotel, Havant, Hants. Contact Dave Crees, 24 Leigh Road, Havant, Hants, PO9 2ET or tel: 023 9247 5100 or mob: 07074 475100.

Kettering Sea Cadets, TS Pytchley: Trafalgar Night reunion and supper dance on October 27 at Tresham Hall, Rothwell Conservative Club, Market Hill, Rothwell. Parade Guard at 1830. Adults £10, Cadets £5. Contact Bill Barry at willynbarry@aol.com or tel: 01354 657779 or Mike Cartwright at maacartwight@tiscali.com or tel: 07795 382533.

NOVEMBER 2007

HMS Albion (1962-64 Commission): The Old Grey Ghost of the Borneo Coast. The 8th reunion will be held November 3 at the Royal Maritime Club, Portsmouth. Details from Keith Ridley at hmsalbion@hotmail.com or tel: 01480 810848 or write to 18 Littleworth End Offord Darcy St Neots, PE19 5RA.

FEBRUARY 2008

RN Shipmates: No Association? A reunion and social weekend has been designed for those ex shipmates who don't have their own reunion to attend. Whether due to reduced numbers and the association has been wound up; or because nobody has started one for your ship! February 8–11 at Mill Rythe Holiday Village on Hayling Island, well known for Naval reunions. Coach trip Saturday followed by an Up Spirits (sherry for the ladies) and gala dinner; remembrance service Sunday, another Up Spirits, then coach trip or Sod's Opera. Further details from Mike Crowe, RN Shipmates, 7 Heath Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 8PG or mike.crowe1@btinternet.com. Want to start an association? Start it here!

HMS Penelope: Reunion and AGM 2008. To be held in Blackpool, February 15-17. For details of reunion in February and membership, contact the secretary Mike Bee at mike.bee@ntlworld.com or write to 1 Oddfellows Street, Mirfield, WF14 9AB.

MARCH 2008

New Zealand Branch, Wrens Association: If you are a former Wren and in New Zealand in March 2008, you are invited to a reunion being organised by the Auckland Branch of the Wrens Association. It is being held March 21-24. For more details contact Jill Thompson at jill.thompson@clear.net.nz

APRIL 2008

Fleet Air Arm Association: Annual reunion/AGM in Bournemouth, April 4-5: Full details and application form may be obtained from association, branch secretaries or from Barry Simons on 01825 872539.

HMS Ganges Association: Annual reunion, April 25-28, at the Norbreck Castle Hotel, Blackpool. Rooms available. Contact Des Kerrigan on 07802 182 499, or e-mail: dkerrigan@railex.co.uk. Looking forward to seeing you there.

MAY 2008

HMS Impregnable/Drake Association: Reunion takes place in Plymouth, May 9-11. For more details contact the chairman at hawkins75@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 0121 532 6141 or write to 'Fernlea', 79A, Beeches Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, B65 0AS.

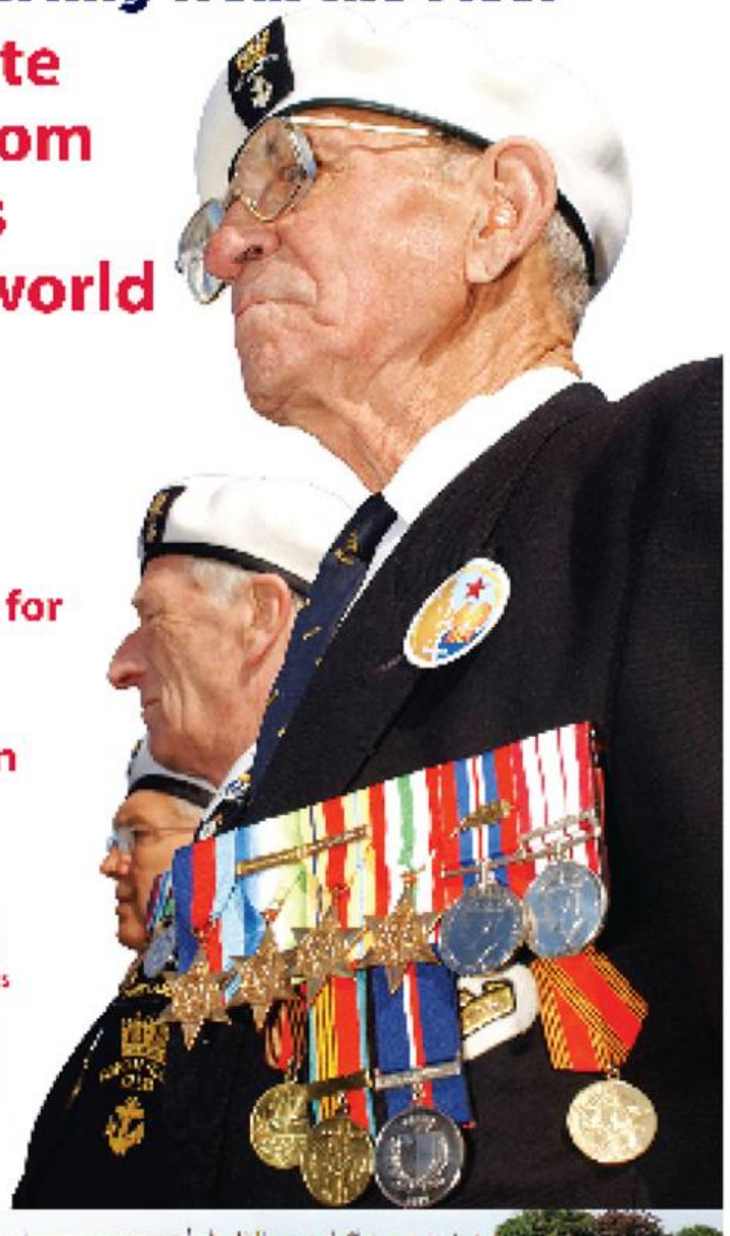
HMS Solebay: 11th annual reunion will be held at the Shanklin Hotel, Isle of Wight May 16-18 2008. All ex-Solebays, friends, relatives, or anyone interested is welcome. Contact Malcolm Clarke at malcolm@solebay.org or tel: 0117 962 2500.

SEPTEMBER 2008

HMS Hampshire: As in the past the re-unions of D06 HMS Hampshire have been successful, I have decided to organise a reunion around September/October 2008 (date TBA). It will be held in Birmingham at the Nautical Club (if possible), as it is central for most, any old Hampshires from all commissions are welcome, for all those interested please contact me. Ray Crawford at ray@crawford1956.wanadoo.co.uk, tel: 07971 563503 or write to 8 The Orchard, Townfield Lane, Barnton, Northwich, Cheshire, CW8 4LT.

NOTICEBOARD ENTRIES

- Notices for this page should be brief, clearly written or typed and addressed to – The Editor, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth. PO1 3HH or email: edit@navynews.co.uk. If you are sending your notice in via email, please include your full address and telephone number.
- Reunions appear in date order, and requests to place an entry in a particular edition cannot be guaranteed.
- Please send in Reunions at least three months (preferably four) before the month of the event.
- There may be a delay before items appear, due to the volume of requests.
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RNPS lost online for the world

THE WEBSITE of the Royal Naval Patrol Service association now contains details of the service's many members who were lost during World War 2 and have no known grave but the sea.

Of the 70,000 men who served with the unit during the 1939-45 period, almost 2,500 members lost their lives at sea with no known grave, but are commemorated on a memorial at Belle Vue Park in Lowestoft.

The memorial, erected by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, bears 17 bronze panels listing the names in date order.

The same names appear in alphabetical order in a register at the Town Hall in Lowestoft and at the association office in Sparrows Nest.

Local photographer Mick Howes has taken photographs of all the panels, and the RNPS website manager has worked his trickery so that the website now lists each name, linked to the appropriate image from the memorial.

Relatives and friends who were umable to visit the memorial in person will now have the opportunity to view the appropriate panel and register entry on the internet.

The association hopes that this new resource will prove useful to historians and researchers into family history.

Details of the website can be found on the internet at www.rnps.lowestoft.org.uk.



Life in miniature

NO JOKES about the Fleet Air Arm shrinking please…

But Lt Geoff Cooper can squeeze the entire arsenal of naval aviation into a few cardboard boxes.

Mind you, it helps that the 150 or so aircraft are only a few inches long.

The RNR officer's collection receives infrequent airings, almost entirely at the spiritual home of the Fleet Air Arm: RNAS Yeovilton.

The models were on show, as ever, at this year's air day, and are also on display in the FAA museum itself a couple of times annually.

"What I love is that so many people appreciate the collection – they'll come up and say: 'That was the last aircraft I worked on.' That's a great buzz," says Geoff.

But they are not the only times you'll find Geoff at the Somerset air station. "If the details are not in my books I'm down here in the archives checking the colours and markings," he explains.

Such as for the Short Sturgeon, quite possibly one of the ugliest planes ever in RN service (and there have been a few of those…).

The replica of the post-war target tug and anti-submarine patrol aircraft is one of Geoff's prized possessions, created from a 'plasticard' kit last made in 1958 and eventually tracked down by the officer's wife on eBay as a present.

"It took about a month to build – and then I had to go to Yeovilton to get the details right," Geoff adds. "My wife just about puts up with it."

Pride of place in his 'travelling through time in miniature' collection go to two Avengers and a Corsair – aircraft his father flew in the war from HMS Victorious (which the Cardiff-based reservist has also built), accurately recreated down to the last detail: markings, serial number, livery.

After four decades' work and an estimated £5,000 spent building the Fleet Air Arm in miniature, is the collection complete?

"No, not yet. There are still some aircraft out there that I've not built, some I'm still looking for."

By the time air day 2008 comes around, hopefully Geoff's collection will have swelled by three: he's currently working on three Lynxes and a ship, HMS Cardiff.

Goodbye Falmouth, hello Sir Jimmy

WITH EXPERIENCES ranging from basking sharks to Sir Jimmy Savile, it's been an interesting few weeks on board landing ship RFA Mounts Bay.

Mid-July, with the renovation work completed on her galley, the Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship set off to Marchwood for a short freighting run over the channel to Zeebrugge then around the coast to Aberaeron in Wales.

The Bay-class ship was backdrop for the Welsh town's bicentenary celebrations, but due to her girth was unable to berth alongside so had to anchor three miles off the coast.

Unfortunately the unseasonal July weather brought a heavy westerly Atlantic swell which meant the RFA crew missed out on a shoreside reception on the first night.

Next the massive ship headed north up to Scotland, where as she passed between the isles of Barra and Skye the crew spied five basking sharks swimming alongside the ship.

3/O Gordon Buchanan said: "Although occasionally spotted around the UK coast, they are relatively rare and are the second biggest species of shark in the world. Those who spotted them, therefore, considered it a rare privilege and their presence is surely a testament to the richness of life in those waters."

As the auxiliary passed beyond Skye she received a call from the local Stornoway coastguard, requesting help for an angler who had been swept off the rocks and into the sea off Kilmaluag Bay.



● *Sir Jimmy Savile meets crew members on board RFA Mounts Bay at Leith for the Edinburgh Festival*

Despite the RFA's turn of speed, by the time she arrived the Coastguard's helicopter had plucked the man from the water and was flying him to Broadford Hospital on Skye.

Mounts Bay arrived in Leith – squeezing through a lock at the harbour entrance only three metres wider than the ship – on August 1 to act as the Edinburgh Festival Support Vessel.

During the festivities the amphibious ship hosted a Royal Marines Association (RMA) dinner in her capacious vehicle deck, welcoming 170 guests.

Guest of honour was honorary green beret Sir Jimmy Savile, who arrived on board the RFA the night before, clad in his trademark red tracksuit.

3/O Buchanan commented: "He proved to be a friendly, likeable and down-to-earth individual, and his company was very much enjoyed by the entire ship's crew."

With guests on board, the evening began with "a rather painful looking" unarmed combat display by the RMR, a performance from a Royal Marines Band, and a sumptuous feast and auction – raising £1,700 for the RMA.

NOTICEBOARD

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

NAVY NEWS looks back through its pages to recall some of the September headlines of past decades...

40 years ago

THE purchase of the Anita Dan as the successor to iceship HMS Protector was reported in the Navy News 40 years ago.

After conversion she was to change her name to HMS Endurance, in honour of Shackleton's crushed ship from his fateful Antarctic expedition – but this is not the same as the present Endurance that travels southwards each year.

30 years ago

FIFTY locomotives of British Rail were given the names of Royal Navy warships and submarines, past and present.

The 100mph diesels had, up to this point, been the only anonymous engines on the rail network. The Class 50 locos that hauled Intercity trains from London down to the west country were promised an 'individual character' from their Naval names.

20 years ago

HUNTS HMS Bicester, Hurworth, Brocklesby and Brecon – of which two of the four are still in the service – set off for the long journey to the Middle East.

A sudden announcement brought men back from leave and six days of round-the-clock preparations as the small ships readied themselves to head for the troubled region.



● *Minehunter HMS Brecon leaves Portsmouth in 2007 to become the Raleigh alongside training vessel – in 1987 she was setting off for the Middle East amid tension in the Gulf*

Where are you now?

Old Grey Ghost: Seeking three stokers who served with Pete Childe on HMS Albion's 1962-64 commission. They are Dave Burton (my best man), Ken Richardson and Tony Hingston, both from the London area. The Albion's 1962-64 commission reunion is on November 3 in Portsmouth and will be 45 years to the day that Albion sailed for the Far East. Contact Pete Childe at paclchilde@yahoo.co.uk or tel: 01142 887769.

HMS Ajax 1982 and HMS Beaver 1984: Did you serve on either of those two ships at that time? Get in contact with me – we can pull-up a bollard and talk about salty old times. How's time treated you? Beer, maybe, if you're close? Contact AB(M) Steve 'Nobby' Hall at stevelovesleeds@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 07967 050749 or write to 60 Loring Road, Sharnbrook, Bedford, MK44 IJF.

HMS Brilliant: A couple of Old Oppo's and I would like to form some kind of reunion with guy's who served on HMS Brilliant 3Hz Gunner's Mess from 1988 to about 1992. Also if someone knows anyone from this period could you please pass on the idea. Contact Lance Storey at storeyxx@aol.com or write to 29 Churchill Rise, Burstwick, East Yorks, HU12 9HP.

HMS Cassandra Association: Seeking shipmates who served in this CA-class destroyer to join our thriving association. Contact Cliff Longfoot at ongfoo50@hotmail.com or tel: 0151 226 3675 or write to 50 Graylands Road, Walton, Liverpool, L4 9UQ.

Royal Naval College: David Easson is an old friend of Cdre Tim Harris who retired from the Royal Navy in April/May of this year. His last posting was at the Royal Naval College, Dartmouth. David has lost touch with Tim and would very much like to re-establish contact. Get in touch with David at david.easson@nikko.co.uk or tel: 020 7799 7730 or 07887 771104.

HMS Collingwood: Hussin Daud, ex-Royal Malaysian Navy REA1, looking for and need to contact any member of class 721Z Radio Electrical Artificer in HMS Collingwood from 1973-76; April-Dec 1972 HMS Fisgard Class 722Z and 1973-76 HMS Collingwood Class 721Z. Contact Hussin at hussin_daud@yahoo.co.uk or write to 17, Jalan BK 2/12B, Bandar Kinrara, 58200, Kuala Lumpar, Malaysia.

HMS Coventry: I am trying to muster the entire ME Department from HMS Coventry 1982. I have a photo of most of the stokers taken onboard the QEII on our passage home, however some are missing. I would like to get the photo reproduced before the QEII goes off to Bahrain next year. If you were one of the stokers and would like to see the photo contact Ian Luff at ian@wightbyte.co.uk or tel: 01983 240302.

HMS Diamond: Graham Laughlan was an OEM1 on Diamond from January 1963-65. He would dearly love to hear from anybody who served with him at that time. Contact Graham at shasco@ntlworld.com or tel: 0141 944 0159 or write to 234 Drumry Road East, Glasgow, G15 8PG.

HMS Endurance: MEMs Dusty Miller/Gary Ferris are looking for HMS Endurance shipmates who served down south on the 1988-89 or 1989-90 deployment. Contact Steve 'Dusty' Miller at Millerssga@aol.com or 01425 627858, 07769 931220 or post to 132 Manor road, New Milton, Hants BH25 5ED.

HMS Fearless: Trying to get in touch with an old friend Donna Wright, served on Fearless 1995-96. I don't know if she is still in the Portsmouth area. If you can help please contact Paul 'Scouse' Avery at PARAVERY@aol.com or tel: 07708 812592.

HMS Ganges Association: Are you a member of the HMS Ganges Association, or maybe an ex rating who joined this training establishment in the 30s, 40s, 50s, 60s, and 70s. I am trying to get together any ex Ganges boys, or members of the HMS Ganges Association to have their own Swindon and district division of this association. Hopefully if there are enough members the association can join the RNA club in Swindon. If using the RNA club a membership fee would have to be paid. The meetings would be once a month or three times a year, members to decided. If you wish to join contact Bob Winslow at Offcom1@yahoo.co.uk or write to 77 Gipsy Lane, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN2 8DH.

Peter L Newton: Seeking information regarding Peter L Newton who was billeted in Blackpool during WW2. Peter was born in Manchester in 1930, his mother was Dutch with the surname Verdonk. He was billeted with Herbert and Marjorie Wagstaff, Marjorie is still around at the age of 91. Herbert and Marjorie had two girls Wendy and Joan. Marjorie's grandson Mark Elliott would like to be able to arrange some sort of reunion with them all. If you can help, please contact Mark Elliott at elliottm@blueyonder.co.uk or tel: 01253 590431 or 07977 521 671.

HMS Olympus: Looking for Mark Ernest Hunt 'Ernie', served with Buck Taylor at Lympstone and on Olympus, also best man at our wedding 1980. Love to be in contact again. Contact Mrs E Taylor by e-mail at buckandlilliebet@aol.com or tel: 01295 259730.

HMS Protector: Seeking ex-ship's company from all commissions, in particular from 1955-68 when she was the Falkland Islands and Antarctic patrol vessel. There are many tales of daring-do out there, do you know anyone with a tale to tell who served aboard her? Anyone with any information please contact Peter Latham (65-66 commission) at wiggy@bluemurder.org, tel: 0161 724 8164 or visit our website online at http://www.hmsprotector.org.

HMS Royal Oak: Brian a member of the Royal Oak Association lost an uncle Thomas George Godwin when the Royal Oak was sunk at Scapa Flow. Thomas came from Westbourne in Sussex and was a leading telegraphist. Brian would like to contact any family or friends that might be connected with the ship. Contact Brian Godwin at brian227@btinternet.com or write to 73 Nutbeem Road, Eastleigh, Hants, SO50 5JR.

HMS Sirius: Looking to find MEM Hugman (aka Huggy bear), served 1979-80. Last known to be living in London. Please contact Phil Phillip at philm36@aol.com or tel: 0771 3554756 or write to 17 Swanage Close, Bury, BL8 1JT.

HMS Trenchant: Frankie Howard is looking for former submariner CPOMEA John Gamble and his partner Claudia. Last draft was HMS Trenchant in '98-ish. Used to live in Mannamead, Plymouth, and originally hailed from Warrenpoint, Northern Ireland. Had an older brother who also served in the RN. Any info please to Paul Howard, 85 Ribchester Road, Blackburn or tel: 01254 249780.

Navy News on tape

Navy News is available free of charge on tape from Portsmouth Area Talking News for those with difficulty reading normal type. Contact 023 9269 0851 and leave a message with a contact number. No special equipment is needed to play the standard 90-minute cassettes.



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● *(l-r) Navigator Lt Sasha Hall takes a break from staring at the charts; a Marine Fisheries Agency aircraft on patrol over the Irish Sea; Tyne prepares to launch her sea boat; ... which races across the sea; ... towards a trawler*

On the trail of the Tyne team

DON HALE was celebrated as 'man of the year' and 'journalist of the year' back in 2001 after a seven-year campaign as editor of the *Matlock Mercury* to successfully clear the name of Stephen Downing, imprisoned for 27 years for a murder in Derbyshire he did not commit. Today he edits *North & Mid Wales Living* and took up the offer to join HMS Tyne – and his nephew PO Neil McDermott – for a fishery patrol in the Irish Sea and Western Approaches.

ON A bright but bitterly cold and damp Bank Holiday Monday morning, instead of taking it easy and having a long lie in, or planning a relaxing family day, I suddenly found myself wrapped against the elements at 5am on the bridge of HMS Tyne within a very wet Swansea dockyard for a five-day operational tour.

It is a long time since I have seen that particular time of the morning, and after travelling by train to South Wales for much of the previous day, and a 3am start for embarkation, I was somehow glad of the cold chill to keep me awake as the ship carefully negotiated the narrow locks and headed out to sea – and straight into the teeth of challenging Force 7 and 8 gales – complete with severe weather warnings and some very rough seas.

This also became a testing time for some other temporary guests of crewmembers, who clung on to anything and everything they could as the ship rocked and rolled past the fast disappearing Welsh coastline and away from the protection of the Bristol Channel.

Remarkably, as I was being shown to my sparse cool cabin on the lower deck towards the stern of the ship, the Tannoy called for immediate action with "hands to fish board stations". I shared the compact two-berth cabin with engineering Coxswain, PO Andrew Skingley, a rather jovial and informative sailor, who also doubled as the ship's doctor, dentist, policeman and flight attendant.

But, as I tried to stow my gear on the top bunk as the ship lunged, pitched and rolled, I opted to leave this difficult task for a while to rush back on deck to watch the boat crew launch to attend a request to board and examine the papers, nettings and cargo of a large Belgian trawler somewhere on the distant horizon.

Despite the turbulent conditions, the four-man boat crew, aboard one of two Pacific 22 Mk11 RIBs, made the job look so easy as they were slowly winched down into the spectacular foaming waters.

I was amazed that HMS Tyne still maintained her top speed of about 20kts, with the boat crew and her roaring engine, almost hitting the water running, so to speak. Within seconds she was away, bouncing across the heavy swell, just as a crackly radio message acknowledged an understanding of her mission.

Later that day, we spotted HMS Exeter on manoeuvres within a firing range. This gave a young communications sailor the opportunity to try out his signalling techniques – in order to maintain secrecy and radio silence.

On the bridge, Executive Officer Lt Matthew Moore, navigator Lt Sasha Hall and some of her female colleagues gave a brief summary of the highly sophisticated, state-of-the-art civilian and military communication systems.

A series of detailed radar screens showed the positions of other vessels in the area, with colourful tags indicating their nationality, potential cargo, and positions both at that time and from four hours earlier. This information allowed the officers to assess and police their movements and fishing capabilities.

Other equally colourful screens gave indications of the ocean depth, water temperature, and precise navigational links. Regular radio contacts allowed Lt Moore and others to speak to the skippers of a variety of fishing ships from Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, to request permission to board.

Part of their role is the enforcement of national and EU Fisheries legislation within British fishing limits, working closely with the Dept of the Environment, Fisheries and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).



It was interesting to note that during radio contacts with foreign ships, the officers adopted special call signs such as Grey Rat, Tartan Tiger, White Rabbit, Blue Whale and the Silver Squirrel, with unique additional (confidential) references to indicate whether a boarding party was in trouble or not.

The ship's company consisted of 46 members including eight officers (male and female) – two of which were under training – nine senior ratings, and 26 junior ratings.

During my five days aboard, I shared the petty officers' mess and was given full access to all departments, and I was given the opportunity to talk to crew, steer the ship and operate some of her military hardware.

This included working her 20mm cannon – on the upper deck – which can be used for anti-aircraft and a variety of purposes, together with examining her two general purpose machine guns sited on either side of the bridge. The ship also carried a selection of small arms including 9mm pistols, and SA80 rifles.

Tyne's two fast patrol boats could be launched within minutes and had water jet propulsion, and were considered much faster and far more manoeuvrable than conventional RIBs.

During my time aboard, the boats were launched day and night, as required, with officers boarding some 25 vessels, while Tyne herself covered a 500 nautical-mile range.

I was able to go out on one particular mission attending some small fishing ships off the Llyn Peninsula, when the weather was more favourable.

My journey was only about three miles each way, where the mother ship rapidly vanished into a blue haze as the officer in charge quickly accelerated to speeds of up to 30kts – leaving me both exhilarated but soaking wet, and hanging on for dear life!

However, after watching several launches in some atrocious conditions and patrolling outwards of up to 40 miles, I have nothing but admiration to the boarding crews for completing such a difficult and often dangerous task.

The ship was also fitted with a Ram Bow and semi-active roll stabilisation tank to give greater stability in rough seas. It was however, a device that never convinced me, or indeed many other guests of its value as we experienced a good few days to fully test its capabilities.

The days and nights passed very quickly with regular exercises each day including essential lifeboat drills, man overboard and casualty claims, fire and smoke drills, engineering and electrical breakdowns; combined with several top-speed, tactical fly-bys from Hawks.

And on the fourth day, we watched with admiration: a four-man lift from the quarterdeck – in a heavy thunderstorm – by the crew of a Sea King helicopter from RAF Valley on Anglesey (*pictured, left*). The officers were travelling to help open the new Maritime Museum on the island and later joined the ship back in port.

During my tour, we journeyed into the Atlantic, about 60 miles off the Scilly Isles, before returning via the Irish Sea and examining many vessels along the Welsh coastline to Holyhead.

We also enjoyed two sheltered anchorages at Milford Haven, close to the oil terminal and later in Caernarfon Bay.

It was interesting to chat with the officers to hear their stories about potential evasion by foreign ships, and the need for this protective service.

It was also interesting that this Naval experience is also much in demand abroad, with one sailor just returning from a secondment with the Bermudan Navy, and his tales of smugglers and pirates, and a future role with the Germany Navy.

I was also staggered by the complete computerised push-button technology of this fascinating warship, which often resembled a top-class arcade game; and I was pleasantly surprised by the genuine camaraderie and hospitality offered by all ranks.

It was indeed a unique and enjoyable experience, and despite some mixed weather and harsh conditions, I felt comforted to note that all is well with our Navy.



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That bit extra at Wells

WELLS Cathedral School is a co-educational independent school for boarders and day pupils aged 3–18.

It is an 'ordinary' independent school with a 'liberal arts' curriculum, a positive 'family' atmosphere free of the traditions, some would say pretensions, often associated with independent education.

Yet it is also the choir school of Wells Cathedral, educating boy and girl choristers for a cathedral choir of international reputation.

In addition to all of this it is one of the five specialist music schools in the UK, offering an intensive, specialist education and training to some of the most highly-gifted young musicians in this country, and abroad.

The 'family' atmosphere is derived from a unique approach to pastoral care in which day-pupils belong to boarding houses and share them with their boarding residents.

The boarding houses are attractive, historical buildings that have been tastefully renovated in order to provide suites of study bedrooms.

These buildings and their wonderful grounds help to create an inspiring campus in which to learn and grow up.

Wells is in a unique position in that it is the only UK specialist music school that runs in parallel to a regular, independent school.

For specialist musicians it offers wider choices, and possibly unexpected career routes outside music that simply are not available at the other specialist music schools.

The fact that the specialists can live and learn together with students who have other interests helps them to maintain a sense of perspective and become more rounded and better balanced people, without some of the undesirable side-effects of 'hot housing' that has been associated with early specialisation.

For extraordinarily-talented musicians, the ordinariness of Wells is a distinct advantage.

For students who are not musicians, the extraordinary musical provision provides incredible opportunities in every aspect of their lives, and creates a very focused and creative atmosphere in which students thrive from their early years right up to the sixth form.

For more information contact: the registrar, telephone: 01749 834200 or e-mail: admissions@wells-cathedral-school.com.

Churcher's – a lesson in life

SOMEONE once said that: "Children are like wet cement. Whatever falls on them makes an impression."

Anyone who has worked in a school knows that this is true; it's not just about learning your letters and numbers.

There are far more opportunities, experiences and influences.

The extraordinary range of experiences at **Churcher's College** allows children to find a niche in which they can enjoy the rewards of success.

The opportunities in the classroom are matched outside; the Duke of Edinburgh Award; a thriving Combined Cadet Force; global expeditions; unbeaten sports teams; and many more.

Exam certificates are the passport to the next stage in any child's career, and Churcher's provides 'gold-plated' ones.

Churcher's College unashamedly strives for and achieves academic excellence, averaging around 76 per cent A and B grades at A-level puts Churcher's very much in the top echelons in the country.

The difference between school and life is that in school, you're taught a lesson and then given a test. In life, you're given a test that teaches you a lesson.

Churcher's endeavours to give children challenges so that they may learn from them but always within a caring and guiding environment where personal and group success is hugely celebrated.

Hazlegrove pupils face Moor challenges

Hazlegrove has 100 per cent commitment to ensuring that, for boarders, weekends are well organised and give the pupils a program of events that leaves the day pupils feeling that they are the ones missing out because they have to go home.

Earlier this term twenty pupils took part in the Exmoor Challenge.

Spread over three days during a long weekend, the pupils had to navigate the way over the moor, solve problems, answer questions and stick to a tight time schedule as well as camping out for two nights.

This year 116 teams, each consisting of four members, took part from schools and youth organisations across the country.

It therefore caused considerable pride at the school that Team 5 from Hazlegrove not only won their section but were also overall winners of the whole event.

Richard Fenwick, headmaster, commented: "Terrific news. The pupils displayed so many of the characteristics we value so highly at Hazlegrove – teamwork, perseverance, problem solving and responding so positively in an unknown and demanding situation.

"This ranks right up there with sporting, academic and musical success.

"Weekends are an important part of life at Hazlegrove. Pupils can develop their personalities and grow in confidence through so many different events and activities.

"There's always a good number of staff around and to our boarders we want to feel like a second home."



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Saturday 6th October - Senior School Open Morning

WELLS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL

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"Children are like wet cement...
whatever falls on them makes an impression!"



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Truro excels all round

TRURO High School for Girls is an independent day and boarding school set in the heart of Cornwall.

First established in 1880, it has a long and proud record of academic achievement – with pupils consistently achieving excellent qualifications at both GCSE and A-level.

Whilst good teaching clearly plays a major role in maintaining the school's enviable reputation from nursery through to sixth form, small class sizes, individual attention and a warm, friendly atmosphere are seen as equally key to a pupil's overall development.

"We do our very best to ensure that each and every girl is happy here – whether she is a day girl or a boarder,' said headmaster Michael McDowell.

"I believe Truro High School succeeds because everything – the teaching, the environment, the philosophy – is specifically geared to female requirements.

"Pupils don't have all the distractions that sharing a classroom with boys can bring, they are free to develop their own individual self-confidence.

"And, because there is no sexual stereotyping associated with the subjects on offer, they can, if they wish, choose options traditionally seen as more male without fear of appearing 'uncool'."

The school's boarding facilities are currently undergoing a major facelift with en-suite facilities for all rooms.

A wide range of activities – including surfing, sailing, cycling and riding – are regularly organised for boarders and, with easy access to Truro town centre, local beaches and nearby attractions, the girls are kept fully entertained by caring, dedicated staff.

"I've boarded at Truro High School for six years and I've made so many friends,' said 17-year-old Harriet Rafferty.

"There's always plenty going on and the facilities are great. I love it here."

For further information or to arrange an interview and personalised tour, ring Frances Ellison on 01872 272830.



● *Students from Portsmouth High School get into character for their musical* All for the Children

Local history brought to life

JOHN Pounds, who inspired the Ragged Schools movement in the UK, was the subject of a lively musical production by pupils at Portsmouth High School this summer.

The Year 7 and 8 pupils performed the musical entitled *All for the Children*, which charts the life of this Portsmouth-born man, who started his working life as a dock worker before retraining as a cobbler and setting up shop in Old Portsmouth.

Shoppers at Gunwharf Quays saw edited highlights of the production as the girls performed as part of Portsmouth Festivities.

Over 150 pupils from local junior schools watched the production at the John Pounds Centre in Portsea, before taking part in a drama and music workshop led by staff and sixth form.

Angela Blackwell, director of music at the school, said: "After the success of our school musical *Nelson – The Hero* two years ago, I started looking around for another character from local history on which to base a work.

"John Pounds seemed the ideal person given his link with education."

Michelle Hainsworth, drama teacher and director of the production, said: "The musical is special as it has been written by staff at the school.

"The more we found out about the man and his influence, the more we found to write about.

"We have had a huge amount of interest from local primary schools and it is great that we will get the opportunity to perform our work to pupils from three local schools.

"We are delighted that the children of today are still learning from him and about him."

Visitors to the school's open day on Saturday October 6 will be able to see extracts of the production as well as tour the school.

Open Day
Portsmouth High School
Saturday 6 October
9.30 to 12.30

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For a personal tour of the school or more information on our upcoming Open Days, please contact Mrs Ellison on 01872 272830.
Scholarships and assisted places available.
01872 272830 www.trurohigh.co.uk
TRURO HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Look forward at Duke of York

THE band of the **Duke of York's Royal Military School** was delighted to be invited back to play at Twickenham for the Army vs Navy rugby match on May 5 2007.

It is considered that the opportunity to play at an event like this is all part of the broad educational experience that pupils can look forward to at the school.

The Fanfare Trumpets have played at Canterbury Cathedral and during the Lent term pupils joined the Band of the Corps of the Royal Engineers for a concert at the school in aid of the Army Benevolent Fund.

During 2007 the 22,000th pupil entered the school and, coincidently, his great grandfather had also been a pupil in the school.

Founded by the 'Grand Old Duke of York' the school was the first state-funded and state-administered school in the country.

Today it enjoys a strong reputation and is a popular and successful school.

It has always been exclusively for children whose parents are in the Armed Forces.

The term 'Military' refers to the parents' background and the school, therefore, has a unique ethos tailormade for Service children.

There is always plenty to keep the pupils busy and many trips are organised during a school year.



● *The Duke of York's band at Twickenham* Picture: DE&S Photographics

Trips have included a visit to the WW1 trenches in France, a netball tour to Grenada, French and German exchanges, a skiing trip to Fiesch in Switzerland, a tennis tour to Portugal, a hockey tour to South Africa as well as many educational visits to London, Canterbury and Dover.

This year a World Challenge Expedition to Costa Rica has taken place.

The school has, as you would expect, a strong Combined Cadet Force and there are many adventurous activities with regular expeditions at home and abroad.

The school enjoys an excellent reputation academically and in sport, music and drama and pupils at the school can be proud of all their achievements.

West Hill's new entry

FROM September 2007, **West Hill Park** in Titchfield, near Fareham, is offering a number of special fees awards for external children joining the prep school, for children in years 3 to 8.

These awards are not specifically aimed at the academically-gifted child as other talents are equally recognised and valued.

The headmaster and staff at West Hill Park believe that all children have something to contribute to school life.

Cranbrook fills colleges

CRANBROOK is a thriving grant-maintained co-educational day and boarding school that caters for the top 20 to 25 per cent of the ability range.

Boarding is on a termly basis with activities arranged for each weekend. Cranbrook expects and maintains high standards of personal behaviour and self discipline.

The large sixth form of over 300 students has an excellent record as over 95 per cent go on to university.

Camelot Cantelo

ONE of Somerset's best kept secrets is a small (420 pupils), ISA-accredited, 'family' day or boarding school for boys and girls aged 7-16.

Set in 20 acres of Camelot countryside, only five miles from Yeovil, **Chilton Cantelo** is an affordable, friendly, flexible school, where all pupils achieve.

In September 2006, the Independent Schools Inspectorate reported: "The school takes justifiable pride in the achievements, self-confidence and maturity its pupils gain in the time they are in the school.

"With its small classes and dedicated staff, it does much to ensure that pupils achieve high academic standards while at the same time seeking to ensure that every child's potential is developed in all areas.

"Pupils are articulate and generally well-motivated in their work while the pastoral care they receive is excellent. Pupils' personal development is clearly evident in their understanding and respect for others, and in their interest in the wider world."

There is no substitute for visiting the school in person – the school promises that you will not be disappointed.

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EDUCATION

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www.wellington-school.org.uk

Best of old and new at Shebbear

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

Today's rural boarding schools strive to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present.

Many parents feel that the essence of boarding in the United Kingdom is best captured in a rural setting, where the natural elements of peace and quiet, fresh air and space to play can be combined with modern facilities housed in historic buildings.

At **Shebbear College**, modern boarding houses offer comfortable 'home from home' facilities and a stable environment where changing family situations and relationships do not disturb a child's equilibrium.

A country setting provides an environment where children can be children. Equally important are the members of staff that dedicate their time to help growing children.

At Shebbear College, shielded from the dangers of city streets, pupils experience personal safety – a highly desirable pre-requisite to learning.

The pressures of city schools to adopt more 'sophisticated' lifestyles are, to some degree, held at bay.

Similarly, the drug culture that dominates so often in urban society is diminished by Shebbear's rural location and the bounds of a residential campus.

Though once removed from the hurly-burly of the metropolis, pupils can keep in touch with what goes on through e-mail and internet provision.

This rapid communication system allows the best of both worlds. Thanks to the internet, there is no sense of the isolation that used to prevail in country schools.

Technology allows frequent communication with home and parents can feel reassured that, in an increasingly hostile world, their children are in a safe, secure environment.

Specialise with CEAS

CEAS (Children's Education Advisory Service) have recently employed two new parent partnership officers, Sue Wright and Peter Flood.

Their role is to assist parents who are experiencing difficulties with or have questions about their children's education, with a particular focus on special educational needs.

They are also on hand to help parents who wish to appeal for school places for their children.

Based at CEAS head office in Upavon, Wiltshire, Sue and Peter can offer telephone support to parents, and – where logistics allow – will travel to visit families.

They are able to offer valuable practical advice, drawing on the wealth of experience that they have in the world of education.

Sue comes from a teaching background, and spent twelve years working at a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) in Bedfordshire.

PRUs exist to provide education for those children who, for one reason or another, do not 'fit' into mainstream schools, although their focus is to get pupils back into mainstream education.

Sue has worked with children with a range of SEN, including autistic spectrum disorders and behavioural issues.

Peter is well-acquainted with life in a Service family, as his father was in the Army and he himself served in the RAF; he also has a son who is a Royal Marine currently serving in Afghanistan.

This background gives him a valuable insight into the issues faced by Service families.

From the RAF Peter went into teaching, working at a boys' school in Lincolnshire.

He is also a director of Grantham and district Mencap, which provides opportunities for adults with learning disabilities.

Both Sue and Peter spoke with warmth and enthusiasm of their new roles despite having been very busy since their arrival.

The newly-created positions of parent partnership officers clearly demonstrate that CEAS provides a valuable service to Service families, and that it is responding to the level of need in the Service community for information and advice on educational matters.

Other services provided by CEAS include:

- A registration service for children with special educational needs which then enables it to support families in securing the right educational provision;
- Specialist advice and support in meetings, hearings and appeals forums;
- Help with retaining your quarter if your child is at a crucial stage of their education;
- Information about boarding schools and allowances.

Further information can be obtained from www.ceas.mod.uk.

You can contact CEAS on 01980 618244 (helpline) or at enquiries.ceas@detsa.co.uk.

Scottish care at Victoria

QUEEN Victoria School is a co-educational boarding school which provides stable, uninterrupted and high-quality education for the children of Scottish Service personnel, or those who are serving in Scotland.

The school offers a wide and balanced curriculum following the Scottish educational system.

Pastoral care is given a high priority along with careers guidance and social education. Queen Victoria aims to provide a stable 'home from home' environment, promote the welfare and happiness of each individual child and develop their self-esteem.

Naval tradition strong at RHS

THE **Royal Hospital School** in Holbrook has a long tradition of music that comes from its naval heritage.

The school's 130-strong Chapel choir has sung at prestigious events at St Paul's Cathedral and the Royal Albert Hall.

The school has invested in a multi-million pound music school which once complete will house a 200-seat recital hall, 18 practice rooms and a technical suite.

For more information about music at the Royal Hospital School and scholarship applications, please contact the director of music on 01473 326222 or music@royalhospitalschool.org.

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As well as an established national reputation for musical excellence, the School offers outstanding sports facilities, including RYA sailing tuition, and every pupil has an opportunity to pursue a huge range of interests and activities.

Fees for families claiming MOD CEA are set so that for 2007/08 parental contribution is just £1,704.

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The Royal Hospital School



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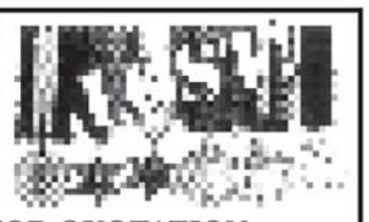
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Admiral marks African tragedy

CAPTAIN Henry Stump was in a hurry.

With U-boats waging an unrestricted campaign against UK-bound merchantmen, he was a prime target, so that night in February 1917 he drove his 11,000-ton ship SS Daro through the Channel fog at full speed.

Crossing his path was the smaller steamer SS Mendi, making its way to Le Havre on the last leg of a passage which had begun in Cape Town over a month before.

On board were 805 black privates of the 5th Battalion South African Native Labour Corps, bound for the Western Front and trench-digging or stretcher-bearing duties. With them were 22 white officers and a ship's crew of 33.

The Darro smashed into the Mendi's bow 12 miles south of the Isle of Wight, knocking the troopship on her side.

Stump simply reversed his ship and continued on his way.

The Mendi went down in 25 minutes, and many died in the freezing Channel as they awaited rescue.

More than 600 black soldiers died, as did every crewman and nine white officers. Just 200 were plucked from the icy waters by the crew of destroyer HMS Brisk.

The sinking of the SS Mendi is surpassed only by the Battle of Delville Wood on the Somme as the gravest loss of life in South African military history.

Henry Stump was cashiered over the tragedy and had his licence revoked for 12 months.

The survivors ended up in France, where they were chiefly employed in the docks.

Only since the end of Apartheid have South Africans begun to fully appreciate the sacrifices of the men of the Mendi and their 20,000 comrades in the Native Labour Corps.

And so it was that the head of South African Navy, Vice Admiral Johannes Mudimu, visited Portsmouth on a damp July day 90 years after the Mendi tragedy.

Berthed in Portsmouth was South African frigate SAS Amatola, exercising and training with the RN before heading home.

The Amatola sailed for waters off St Catherine's Point, where a wreath was cast into the sea by South African Defence Minister Mosiua Lekota at the spot where the Mendi foundered.

It marked the culmination of a series of ceremonies and events in the UK.

Vice Admiral Mudimu used the Mendi commemorations to visit RN establishments, including Devonport and Yeovilton.

The admiral was hosted by 702 and 815 NAS during his visit to the latter, where he spent two hours talking to personnel about the Lynx; the mainstay of RN frigate and destroyer operations is also the helicopter of choice in the South African frigate force.



● *The Fly Navy balloon takes to the air at the International Balloon Fiesta in Bristol, the largest event of its kind in Europe. With fine weather and perfect winds throughout the weekend, the Yeovilton-based team were able to take part in all the mass ascents. On the Friday lunchtime Fly Navy was inflated on her own at the head of the arena to provide an appropriate setting for a Seafire display from the RN Historic Flight. Later that evening, to the sound of* **Heart of Oak** *played by a lone bagpiper, Fly Navy went aloft again as part of a record-breaking mass ascent of 110 balloons. Fly Navy is piloted by, and for the duration of the festival was supported by, members of the Royal Naval Reserve*

Picture: Lt Gary Rimay-Muranyi

Rescue heroes win bravery awards

THE bravery and skill of Naval aviators in the rescue of 26 mariners from a stricken cargo ship have been recognised by awards from the MOD.

British-registered container ship MSC Napoli was holed and started to take in water in a severe storm 40 miles off the Lizard Point in January this year.

Fearing his ship would sink, the master ordered his 25-strong crew to abandon the Napoli and take to the lifeboat, and the Coastguard alerted 771 Search and Rescue Squadron at RNAS Culdrose.

Two Mk 5 Sea Kings were scrambled, and on arrival at the scene found all 26 survivors were in the lifeboat.

But the little craft was being battered by waves of 40-50ft, so POA Jay O'Donnell was lowered to the lifeboat to assess the situation.

He managed to get on board with some difficulty, and found conditions were both unpleasant and potentially threatening, so the decision was made to airlift the men.

The first 13 were winched up to Rescue 194, which returned to Culdrose as her sister, Rescue 193, retrieved the remaining 13.

The officers in charge of each aircraft, Lt Guy 'Chuck' Norris and Lt Cdr Martin 'Oz' Rhodes were both given the Queen's Commendation for Bravery in the Air, their citation noting that it was a reward for "their outstanding flying skills in atrocious conditions during the rescue…"



● *Vice Admiral Johns finds his old course photograph on the wall at RAF Shawbury during a visit to the Defence Helicopter Flying School – Admiral Johns was a member of No 182 helicopter instructors course in 1979. Visiting the DHFS as both RN 'customer' and as Rear Admiral FAA, Admiral Johns was briefed on all aspects of helicopter training, he flew in both the Squirrel and Griffin aircraft operated at the school, and met RN and RM staff and students on the base.*



● *POA Jay O'Donnell (left) and Lt Guy Norris at RNAS Culdrose*

POA O'Donnell received the Queen's Gallantry Medal, his citation stating that "… despite the appalling conditions he displayed great courage and determination, and using his considerable strength swam towards the lifeboat where he managed to grab the guardrail.

"Once secure he swiftly disconnected from the winch hook to enable the pilot to increase height.

"For 90 minutes O'Donnell braced himself on the stern of the boat and one by one he briefed, reassured and prepared all 26 survivors for winching to the waiting helicopters.

"O'Donnell remained undeterred and calm throughout, and although severely weakened by regular hauling of the line attached to the rescue strop, he remained on board until all survivors were safely on the aircraft.

"It was only then that he was recovered to Rescue 193, where typically his first thought was for the survivors, and he set about using his medical training to assess and aid the exhausted crew."

Reunion marks Hong Kong anniversary

A REUNION at HMS President in London marked the tenth anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong to China.

Some 130 officers who had served in the former colony, plus partners, were joined by a number of special guests.

Among them were Lt Cdr Bill Lane RNR, who was on board HMS Plym as Hong Kong was liberated in 1945, and Rear Admiral Chris Clayton, the Commanding Officer of HMS Chatham – the last British warship to leave the port with the Royal Yacht in 1997.

The reunion began in the Chapel Royal in the Tower of London, attended by the penultimate Governor of Hong Kong, Lord Wilson and his wife Lady Wilson.

The service was conducted by the Rev Paul Abram, who has been Chaplain at the Tower for 11 years, and was assisted by Canon Roger Devonshire, who was padre at HMS Tamar, the Royal Navy establishment in Hong Kong, in the 1980s.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Adrian Johns, the patron of the reunion and whose first command was Hong Kong patrol ship HMS Yarnton in the 1980s, said: "We look back with great pride at the naval contribution made in Hong Kong right from the first days as a British colony."

Money raised at the reunion supported the Hong Kong Locally Enlisted Personnel Trust, a charity first established in 1992 to support ex-RN LEPs and their families.

Event organisers Lt Cdr John McPhail RNR and Helga McPhail said that anyone who served in Hong Kong must have happy memories of the vibrant city.

The reunion brought together officers from as far afield as China, Australia and the United States.

Conference examines slave trade

THE Royal Naval Museum in Portsmouth is to stage another event next month as part of the commemorations of the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade.

A major one-day conference on Saturday October 6 will bring together a number of leading academics in the field, led by Prof James Walvin.

The Chasing Freedom conference will explore the largely unsung role of the Royal Navy in suppressing the trade, and wider issues surrounding the trade and its abolition.

For details, contact Melanie Simpson on 023 9272 7584, email melanie.simpson@royalnavalmuseum.org or visit the website at www.royalnavalmuseum.org

Before that the Friends of the Royal Naval Museum and HMS Victory are holding a sale of second-hand Naval books outside the museum shop in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard on Saturday September 8 between midday and 3.30pm.

Many hundreds of books will be on sale, including many given by the late Cdr Eddie Keogh, with proceeds going to the Museum Library.

For details, ring 023 9272 3795.

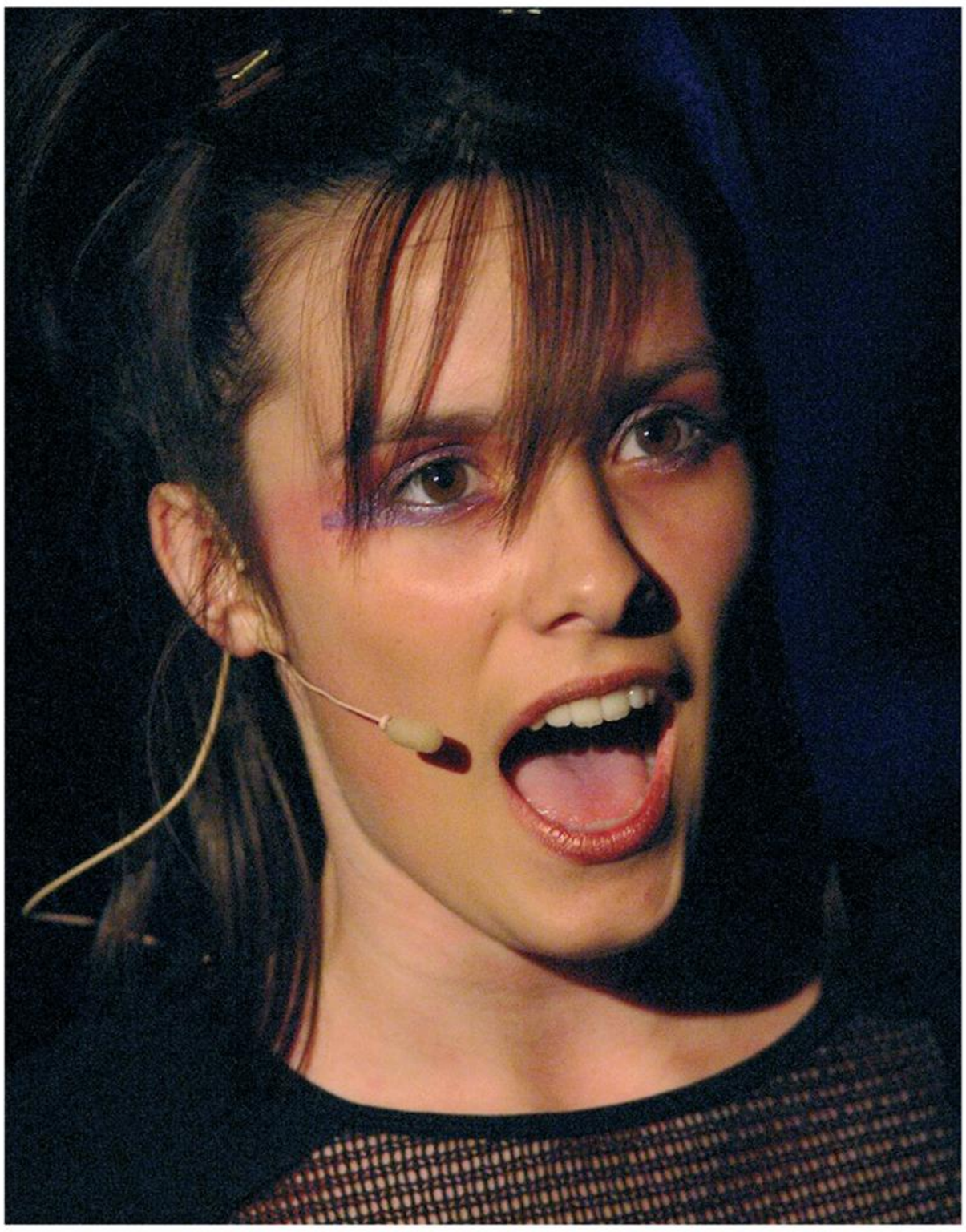
The sale coincides with Heritage Open Days at the Historic Dockyard – further information on special tours for this event are available on 023 9282 9766.

Dark blue VIP

THE Commanding Officer of HMS Raleigh, Cdre John Keegan, acted as Reviewing Officer at a graduation parade of new recruits passing out at RAF Halton, near Aylesbury – including presenting five trophies to top students.

SEA CADETS

Folkestone's diva is much in demand



● *Louise Orfila as Scaramouche in the Round House Theatre production of* **We Will Rock You**

FOLKESTONE cadet Louise Orfila continues to make a name for herself in the music world.

Following on from the success of her debut single for the *Children in Need* charity, as reported in *Navy News* early this year, 14-year-old Louise has been very much in demand.

Not only did she perform with the Royal Marines Band at their sell-out Christmas concert, but she has also recently appeared on stage at the Round House Theatre in Dover, playing the female lead role of Scaramouche in the West End hit musical *We Will Rock You*.

The theatre company won the rights to perform the show, and it was one of the first performances of the musical outside the West End.

Louise won the role against some very tough opposition, all several years older than her.

She was thrilled to hear that she had reached the final three, and astonished to find that she had been chosen to play Scaramouche.

The production was staged in July and was performed in front of a packed house every night – tickets sold out in four days and there was extensive media interest, with Louise appearing on BBC TV and radio as well as in local newspapers.

As a result of the show Louise has received numerous offers to appear at functions, and has attracted interest from a number of magazines.

Now Louise has been contacted by Capt David Cole RM (rtd), former Director of Music with the Royal Marines and now the Director of Music of the Central Band of the Royal British Legion.

Capt Cole saw the show, and as a result has invited Louise to sing with the RBL band at a concert this month.

Louise is currently in the studio recording a debut album of her own songs.

The album is due for release this autumn.

Tunbridge teams in fine form

CADETS from **Tunbridge Wells** unit have enjoyed success in both the National Drill and Piping competition at HMS Raleigh and the Area Band competition at HMS Excellent.

The 13-strong squad at the drill and piping event came first in the Best Armed Drill section and the Best Dressed Guard section, and in LC Alex Heald had the best guard commander.

At HMS Excellent the TS Brilliant band came second in Dress, and had the third best solo bugler (LC Chris Dickinson), the best solo drummer (AB Daryl Williams) and best drum major (OC George Glover).

Overall, the band took first place in the Premier Class.

A team of British Gas employees have made their mark on the TS Brilliant HQ.

The 11 Trade Union reps, led by Senior Steward Andy Patching, were given an introduction to the unit and Corps on arrival.

They then split into groups and set to work at tasks including repointing the main wall, clearing weeds, removing rubbish from a loft, and hanging a very large picture frame on the main deck.

The frame contains the last White Ensign worn by HMS Brilliant when she sailed into Devonport to be decommissioned.

The Ensign was presented to the Royal Borough of Tunbridge Wells, the ship's adopted town, who in turn presented it to TS Brilliant for safekeeping.

Unit chairman Lt (SCC) Derek Ireland said he was very grateful for the support given by British Gas, adding that the work undertaken in just a few hours with the Gas men would have taken his team a lot longer.

Double bonus

ROYAL Marine Cadets of **RMB Stonehouse** have been presented with two cheques totalling £1,000 by the Plymouth Royal Marine Lodge.

The cheques were handed over at the top of Dewerstone Rock, near Shaugh Prior, to remind ex-Royals of pay day in the 1960s when they would run from Bickleigh RM Camp to receive their pay then run back again.

The money will support summer camps promoting and encouraging youth development.

Falklands event has major role for Corps

SOUTH West Area cadets had a major role to play in the Falklands Conflict 25th anniversary commemorations staged at Cheltenham Racecourse.

The cadets provided visitors with displays of the hornpipe, cutlass work, Field Gun running and the finer points of a sailing brig.

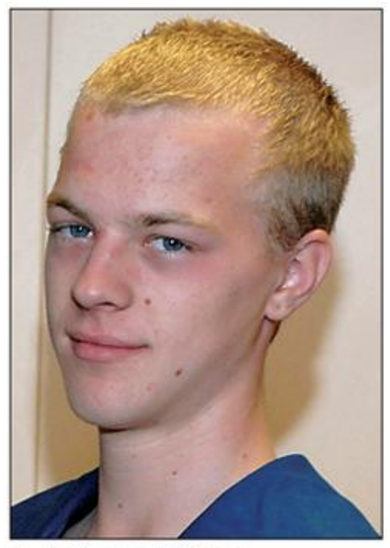
Malvern unit members set up a laser tag arena for members of the public to try out.

Alpha Company Marine Cadets staged a PT display, and then the combined cadets paraded for the Ceremony of Remembrance, which included a Sea Cadet band and a guard of honour.

Other organisations involved included the Band of Her Majesty's Lifeguards, the Pipes and Drums of St Andrews, Rapid UK, RAF and HMP dogs, Innsworth Air Training Corps, **Tameside** Sea Cadets, Gloucestershire Police and Gloucestershire Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fleet Air Arm and RAF laid on flying displays – the afternoon fly-past salute by a C130 Hercules heralded the start of the memorial service.

Thought-provoking reflections from Falklands veterans prompted a short silence before a commemorative evening colours ceremony concluded the day's events.



● *AC Lucas Williams*

Ceremony en route

CAPT Tim Lowe, the Commanding Officer of assault ship HMS Albion, has presented the Lt Cdr Danny Wells Trophy for Best All Round Cadet of 2006 to AC Lucas Williams of the **Sutton** unit.

Lucas was part of a group of eight cadets and seven staff from TS Puma which joined the ship on its passage from Liverpool to Plymouth on an affiliates visit, and the presentation was made on board during the journey.

The trophy could not be presented at the unit's annual presentation evening in December, when Capt Lowe was the guest of honour.

A cheque from the Mayor

HINCKLEY unit has received a cheque for almost £6,000 from the outgoing Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth, Mary Sherwin.

At the start of her term of office, Mrs Sherwin nominated the Sea Cadet unit as one of her charities for the year.

Throughout her year in office Mrs Sherwin has held a series of events, including bag-packing, carol services, a fashion show and a civic ball, all of which raised money for her charities.

Cadets from TS Amazon helped at many of the events – the most successful being the bag-packing, which raised more than £2,000.

Unit Commanding Officer Lt Neil Hartwell RNR said: "It was great fun working with Mrs Sherwin – she was always cheerful and showed great interest in all the activities the cadets were involved in.

"The money that she raised will be spent on fitting out our new galley and purchasing six new canoes for the unit."

Lt Hartwell also spoke of the unit's gratitude to Mrs Sherwin and her consort, Mrs Jennifer Bell.

Tales of old Ganges

STAFF, cadets and members of the Unit Management Committee at **Ruislip** raised more than £2,300 at the Flag Week, which will help fund activities over the coming months.

The cash will also help refurbishments which are to be carried out at the unit's HQ, TS Pelican.

Earlier in the summer Ruislip hosted a visit by members of the West London Division of the HMS Ganges Association, whose chairman Bill 'Perky' Mellow was guest of honour at the TS Pelican Trafalgar Night Dinner last autumn.

Bill Mellow went to HMS Ganges as a 15-year-old in 1936, served in the Royal Navy Commandoes during World War 2, and then became an instructor at HMS Ganges in the 1950s.

Having inspected the ship's company he talked about his early experiences in the Royal Navy before presenting the unit with a cheque for £500 on behalf of the Association.

Cadets and staff at the unit were delighted at the donation, and were also pleased to hear from a number of ex-sailors about their experiences as 15-year-olds starting their working lives.

Medway hosts river admiral's big night



MEDWAY Towns unit held the first Admiral of the River Parade Night at their HQ in Gillingham.

The Mayor of Medway, who is also Admiral of the River Medway, was the Inspecting Officer, and also carried out the official naming ceremony for the unit's new launch MTC George Ward.

The evening was the first of its kind in Medway, and will now take place every two years.

It was appropriate that this was the inaugural year, when long-time Sea Cadet supporter Cllr Val Goulden was the Mayor.

● *Cllr Val Goulden, Mayor of Medway and Admiral of the River Medway, officially names the training craft MTC George*

On arrival Cllr Goulden inspected her personal Guard – an honour to which she is entitled as an admiral.

She then carried out the naming ceremony for the George Ward, christening the boat in traditional fashion with a bottle of champagne.

The ceremony was followed by inspection of the Cadet Divisions and then the cutting of the dedication cake and a reception for all cadets and their guests, of whom there were more than 70.

CO S/Lt Stephen Small RNR said: "It is a marvellous opportunity to demonstrate the close relationship Medway Towns unit has with the local authority and community.

The Cadets take a great pride in their unit and the Sea Cadets, who provide them with opportunities and experiences they could not get anywhere else."

Among the guests were representatives from Pembroke House, the old sailors home, the RNA's Chatham branch and the Royal British Legion.

Cllr Goulden said: "I have always been impressed with the dedication of the adult volunteers in the Sea Cadets and the results they achieve with our young people, proving what can be done with good role models and sound leadership.

"This unit has a special place in my affections and I will always be a part of the Sea Cadet family."

Brig helps with profile

FLAGSHIP TS Royalist was on hand to help boost the profile of the **Bristol** units at a two-day public relations event.

More than 300 local business people and dignitaries were invited to visit the brig in the city's Cumberland basin.

The event was designed to raise money for the unit, and awareness of what the Sea Cadets can do for youngsters.

It was also staged to back the **Bristol (Adventure)** unit, which is hoping to renew the lease on its Deal Cottage HQ which sits on the city dockside.

SEA CADETS

PT team heads for Australia

THE Physical Training branch is a unique element of the Sea Cadet Corps – and a chosen few will be travelling to Australia next month to spread the word.

The branch not only promotes a healthy lifestyle through the likes of physical fitness and sensible eating, but also encourages youngsters to teach and lead by example.

Through display work the branch promotes the Corps in the eye of the public, and through reward cadets can gain a civilian qualification for all their input.

With all that in mind, the HQ PT team now aims to share this knowledge on the international front with a trip Down Under.

It will be a working trip, with cadets and staff delivering training and putting on traditional displays throughout their time in the Southern Hemisphere.

On arrival, the team will spend a day acclimatising to their new surroundings; from then on, they



will be training young people and adults from the Australian Naval Cadets (ANC) during an annual camp at HMAS Stirling in Western Australia.

As part of the experience, British cadets will be encouraged to take up various activities with the ANC to build and develop on a cultural front.

Leading the team will be HQ Staff Officer (PT) Lt Cdr (SCC) Vicki Marson RNR, who has been involved with the PT branch "for more years than I care to let on."

Alongside here will be CPO (SCC)s Simon Collins and Neil Smith, both Area Staff Officers responsible for training and development of PT on their own patches.

PO (SCC) James Croucher is a young and experienced PTI who started his PT career as a young cadet, and also on the flight south will be Lt (SCC) Ronald 'Cheeky' Cheek RNR, an Australian who lives and works in the UK.

The support staff are CPO (SCC) James Welch and PO (SCC) Nicky Welch, who have spent many a weekend with the PT team supporting the staff in duties in and out of the gym.

All the adults on the team will be giving up their own time to escort the cadets and are fully committed to delivering high quality training.

As for the cadets, they have been specially-picked with a simple criteria – all have repeatedly demonstrated personal gain, commitment to their development and the development of others and self-sacrifice to the benefit of the PT branch.

Fundraising has been a major concern of the entire team in recent months, to augment the support given by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets, the Corps' parent charity.

To date, they have, as a team:

- Swum the equivalent mileage to swimming the English Channel, using the HMS Collingwood swimming pool (which raked in more than £2000);
- Performed traditional club-swinging and hornpipe displays to the public at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard open day, Collingwood Field Gun 100 Day, at local village fetes and shopping centres and on board HMS Warrior at various events;
- Set up raffle stalls.
- Individual cadets have also run car boot stalls and contacted local papers to request support.

More displays and fundraising activities are planned.

Many companies have been approached to support the cadets, and among those who have lent their support are VT, BAE Systems, FSL, Seafarers UK, the Connaught Drill Hall Trust the Severn Seas Club, Baxter and Grimshaw Trust, *Navy News*, BOC Australia and Shep Woolley.

Thanks are also due to Cdre David Steel, Portsmouth Naval Base Commander, and all the departments at HMS Nelson who provided facilities for fundraising activities.

Anyone who can help the cadets meet their fundraising target should contact Vicki on 07840 970076

Vicki is aiming to produce a book of the history of the branch, but has next to no information to work on.

She has set up an email account, hoping to get information from former members of the SCC PT branch.

If you were, contact Vicki with as much detail as possible – email hqsopt@hotmail.co.uk



● *Sea Cadet PTI trainees on parade at HMS Temeraire during their five-day course in Portsmouth*



● *POC Shane Faulkner is presented with his Corps PTI Badge by Cdr Robert Holmes in the gym at HMS Temeraire*

Clubs and dancing – PT-style

WITH a little dance, some skip jumping and the inevitable club-swinging, two groups of cadet PT enthusiasts have been climbing the rungs of the branch ladder.

The gym at HMS Temeraire in Portsmouth was the setting for two passing-out displays, in which cadets (and the odd adult instructor) danced the traditional hornpipe, swung clubs to music, then performed their own unique skip-jumping routine.

All the displays had to be learned and rehearsed in the evenings, after the rigorous work for the day had been completed – just another indication of the effort and dedication which are the hallmarks of the branch.

For one cadet there was a special reason to celebrate – POC Shane Faulkner was presented with the prestigious Corps PTI Badge by the Executive Officer of HMS Temeraire, Cdr Robert Holmes.

It is thought to be the first time in over 20 years that this symbol of excellence has been awarded.



● *The successful Hinckley unit sailing team*

Trophy dream is still alive

CADETS from the **Hinckley** unit are still chasing their dream of landing the big prize – the national sailing trophy.

At the Eastern Area regional finals, held on the River Trent in Nottingham, the Hinckley sailors were crowned regatta champions for the third year running.

The Leicestershire unit proved too good for the opposition in sailing seamanship class.

This requires cadets to rig and then sail to a high standard a large sailing boat.

LC Laura Hartwell, the coxswain of the crew, said: "This is a fantastic result.

"We have been trying for three years to win this trophy – now on to the nationals!"

The sailing team – LCs Hartwell, Watton and Jordan and OCs Dodds and Dickins –along with canoeist Marine Cadet Singleton, will be fighting it out against the pick of the other areas at the Excel Centre in London this month.

The Commanding Officer of the unit, Lt Neil Hartwell, said: "These cadets train hard for all these competitions, and this year they are getting their just rewards.

Welsh cadets help celebrate Field Gun 100

WELSH cadets joined Army colleagues to play a leading role in the RN Command Field Gunners centenary celebrations in London.

The Sea Cadets, from **Cardiff**, and Army Cadet Musicians from Bridgend, were invited to take part in events held at the Painted Hall of the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich.

The Inter Command Field Gun race was the star attraction at the Royal Tournament at Earls Court until the event was halted in 1999.

The Welsh youngsters joined more than 350 ex-field gunners to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first running of the competition.

A party of 20 cadets and three instructors – POs John Callaghan, Dave Messer and Allison Ward – provided a guard of honour for the gunners, and later brought proceedings to a close by hauling down the White Ensign during Ceremonial Sunset.

PO John Callaghan said: "This has been a fantastic experience for these young boys and girls.

"They have been a part of history, and it will be an everlasting memory for them."

The 17-strong Army cadet band contributed music for the evening.

The organiser of the event, Lt Cdr Grassy Meadows RNR, from Barry, in South Wales, who is a member of HMS Cambria, said: "These Welsh cadets have been absolutely fantastic and a great credit to their associated cadet organisations.

"They have made a fantastic evening a very memorable occasion for us all."



● *LC Hanlon carries the* **Scarborough** *unit standard at the naming ceremony for the town's new lifeboat. Also at the ceremony was the Officer-in-Charge of the unit, CPO Davies. The Tamar-class vessel was named Fanny Victoria and Frank Stubbs – Frank was at one time commodore of the Scarborough Yacht Club, and when his wife died she left a substantial sum of money to the RNLI*

Sunday activity was load of rubbish

A TEAM of 30 cadets from the **Northampton and Wellingborough** unit gave up their Sunday afternoon to help clear the River Nene of rubbish as part of a sponsored clean-up.

The youngsters collected more than 50 bin bags of waste, and their haul included a shopping trolley, a fire extinguisher and several unexpected items.

Cadet Gent won the prize for the most unusual find with a large traffic separation bollard and a gum shield.

Unit Commanding Officer Lt (SCC) Chris Read RNR said: "Events such as these are important in showing our young people the importance of the local environment.

"We have installed energy-saving bulbs and low water-usage toilets in the unit and have investigated the possible installation of a wind turbine.

"Linked with our recycling scheme for waste and our policy to minimise the use of lighting, we feel we must be one of the greenest units in the Sea Cadet Corps – and obviously, our primary form of boating is either oars or sail."

Cadets are also encouraged to involve themselves in the community, and raised £165 through a dragon boat race in aid of the Northamptonshire and Warwickshire Air Ambulance.

The river clean-up is expected to garner around £250 for the Friends of the Children of Chernobyl, a charity which provides breaks for children who live near the ruined Soviet nuclear power plant, giving them a few weeks away from the area irradiated by an explosion in 1986.

More than 30 cadets from the unit overcame the opposition and the fast-flowing River Trent to take the regatta trophy for the best all-round result in boating at the Eastern Area regional championship.

Organised by **Nottingham** unit, the event was held during a spell of very wet weather, but it made victory all the sweeter.

Against 60 other units, the senior boys took the pulling events while the power-boaters and the girls rowing teams were runners-up.

Coxswain AC Stuart Jolley said: "Controlling the boats in the fast-flowing river was really hard, but it was great to win the event and it means the months of hard work have paid off."

The cadets are due to compete in the national finals in the Docklands of London this month.

Eddie gets his medal

THE former Commanding Officer of **Ramsgate and Broadstairs** unit has been presented with his Cadet Forces Medal.

CPO (SCC) Eddie Doody received the medal from Cdr Alan Tremelling, CACTO Portsmouth, on board HMS Bristol during the Naval Cadet Forces Summer Camp, for which Eddie provides the stores and transportation facility.

The medal recognises Eddie's 14 years' service in the Corps.

Eddie is still an active instructor in the East Kent District, and land he joined Sea Cadet HQ as a national course supervisor, travelling the country supervising cadet courses at establishments such as HMS Seahawk (Culdrose in Cornwall), HMS Raleigh, the Navy's new entry training base at Torpoint in Cornwall, HMS Excellent on Whale Island in Portsmouth, HMS Collingwood in Fareham, HMS Sultan in Gosport and HMS Caledonia in Scotland.



● *Sea Cadets on a Royal Marines rigid raider craft pass HMS Dauntless on the River Clyde*

Seamanship skills put to good use at festival

SKILLS honed in drill halls and on the water were put to good use when Sea Cadets from across the West of Scotland helped out at the River Festival on the Clyde.

The busy two-day event – the biggest yet – saw units from as far afield as **Fort William** in the north, **East Kilbride** in the south and **Airdrie** in the east travel to Glasgow to help with the smooth running of the festival.

According to Richard Davies, Maritime Director of the Glasgow River Festival: "The Sea Cadets played a vital role in making the 2007 Glasgow River Festival a success both on and off the water.

"From escorting visiting yachts to their berths, line handling for passenger boats and tall ships, to laying the boom for a charity duck race, cadets got involved in a thoroughly organised, disciplined - and enthusiastic manner.

"These young cadets and their leaders are a credit to the Sea Cadets name."

From a training point of view, three days of hard work meant that the cadets could put the various seamanship skills they had learned back at their own units into practice in a real situation with real ships.

These included the Corps' own flagship, TS Royalist, which was paying a rare visit to Glasgow to change cadet crews.

Other vessels included the tall ship Tenacious, the historic Clyde-built coaster Kyles and the various ferries which were bringing people into the festival from Braehead.

A highly successful PR tent was also run by instructors and cadets on the dock, next to the Glen Lee historic sailing ship.

Saturday was made even more interesting by high winds and the river carrying the flotsam of a week of rain and rough weather.

This caused problems for berthing parties and the boats tied to pontoons in the Princes Dock.

But it wasn't all hard work – apart from the chance to meet other young people from completely different places, the cadets were treated to VIP tours of HMS Bangor and the Scottish Fisheries Protection Vessel Jura.



● *Sea Cadets enjoy a trip in rigid raiders along the River Clyde*

But for many, the high point of the weekend was a high-speed tour 'doon the watter' with the Royal Marines in two of their Rigid Raider assault craft.

Sights taken in included views of the three new type 45 destroyers Daring, Dauntless and Diamond, which were in various stages of construction and testing with BAE Systems.

Sophie and Shannon Feggans, both from Fort William, said "It was great fun to be out on the water on the Sunday. The Royal Marines Rigid Raiders were the best things we've ever been on".

District Officer Lt Cdr 'Abe' Lincoln, who organised the cadets, thanked cadets and staff for giving up their time to make it such a success.



● *Whitehaven Sea Cadets Katie Moir (left), Adam Crellin and Kaylie Lancaster, who are set to visit Canada*

Trio cross the Atlantic

THREE cadets from the **Whitehaven** unit were due to fly to Canada as *Navy News* went to press.

The trio – Katie Moir, Adam Crellin and Kaylie Lancaster – will spend two weeks on Canada's Atlantic coast when they visit their affiliated Canadian Sea Cadet Corps in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island.

The fist week will be spent in Nova Scotia, where they will have a couple of days touring Halifax before moving on to HMCS Acadia, one of the main Sea Cadet summer training camps in Canada.

Whilst there they will be involved with part of the Canadian cadet training programme before attending the final Passing Out Parade of the season.

The second week will be on Prince Edward Island where Katie, Adam and Kaylie will take part in various activities with local cadets.

Highlights of the visit will include meetings with both the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier of Prince Edward Island.

The visit has been supported by the Mary Grave Trust, which has made a substantial grant toward the total cost, and the PEI Division of the Navy League of Canada, which has met the cost of accommodation on the Island.

The three cadets have also been busy raising money toward the cost of the trip.

Kaylie (15) overcame her fear of heights to climb the 24m mainmast of Corps flagship TS Royalist when the ship visited Whitehaven recently, Adam (13) is doing a sponsored run and Katie (14) has been washing cars.

The entire ship's company of the Whitehaven unit gathered on the town's quay to see Lt (SCC) Peter Lucas RNR receive a clasp for his Long Service Medal from the Mayor of Copeland, Cllr Anne Faichney.

Lt Lucas – who was unaware of the impending presentation – has given 18 years as an adult volunteer to TS Bee, having originally joined as a cadet.

He was commanding officer for three years, his wife Kath is a member of the Unit Management Committee and their three children are all cadets.

Barnsley to mark 65th with reunion

BARNSLEY unit opened its doors for the first time on September 1 1942, so this month celebrates its 65th anniversary.

In the early days the Yorkshire unit only accepted male cadets, and was under the command of Lt Goodyear, who was also a founder of the West Riding Sailing Club.

Over the decades the unit has moved its location through various buildings and schools in the centre of town, finally coming to rest at its current site in Racecommon Road in the 1960s.

The following decade it started to admit female cadets, while it was the 1990s before a junior section was started to cater for those between the ages of ten and 12.

January 1 2000 saw a major development when Barnsley was officially approved to have a Marine Cadet detachment.

As part of the TS Diomede celebrations, the unit is to hold a reunion of former cadets in the unit, so organisers would like to hear from them – especially those from the early years.

Tickets are now on sale for the reunion, at a cost of £5 to cover the cost of refreshments.

Contact PO Caroline Devonport, the unit training officer, on 01977 652880 on 01226 295531, or email admin@barnsleyseacadets.co.uk

Transports of delight

TAMESIDE cadets have taken delivery of new transport for land and water.

After raising nearly £12,000, the unit is now enjoying the benefits of a new minibus – part of a series of investments which ensure the cadets have use of the best equipment.

In similar vein, the unit also has a new Laser Bahia training boat, paid for by a grant of £5,750 from the Local Network Fund.

That joins the Tameside flotilla of a Delta rescue RIB, ten kayaks, two Canadian canoes, two Laser Vegas and four Laser Picos.

Global reach

FIVE Sea Cadets from **Walton-on-the-Naze** unit were chosen to represent the UK at international camps around the world.

PPO George Brown and POC Karline Bigwood were chosen to travel to Canada, POC Kelsey Richards was picked for the South Korean trip and POCs Hannah Bettany and Kyle Doyle were on the list for Russia, which included ten days aboard the training ship Novgorod.

REVIEW

‘The greatest martyrdom’

NO BATTLE casts a shadow over the British psyche more than the Third Battle of Ypres, more commonly known by the name of its final objective: Passchendaele.

The three-month slog in the mud cost the Empire a quarter of a million men in the summer and autumn of 1917.

But it cost Britain far more than ‘mere’ lives; it gave the ordinary Briton cynicism, mistrust, a reason to doubt authority.

Passchendaele cost the Tommy his soul. “For the first time the British Army lost its sense of optimism,” observed *Times* correspondent Sir Philip Gibbs, “and there was a sense of deadly depression among many officers and men.”

The battle’s 90th anniversary has, rightly, sparked a flurry of interest in the sacrifices made.

Peter Barton’s contribution – **Passchendaele: Unseen Panoramas of the Third Battle of Ypres** (*Constable*, £30 ISBN 978-1-84529-422-9) – is unique.

The author has spent nearly a decade ferreting around in the photographic archive of the Imperial War Museum, where, for the better part of 80 years, sprawling black and white panoramic images of the battlefield have lain forgotten.

Barton has already produced two books using these panoramas – photographs taken not for artistic purpose but so the generals of both sides could dictate, or rather try to dictate, the battle in Flanders fields.

Passchendaele is by far the most hauntingly magnificent of the trio with hundreds of images – and not merely panoramic vistas of the Belgian terrain.

There are trench maps, trench diagrams, cross-sections of trenches, sepia images of the battlefield, reconnaissance photographs, aerial images, sketches, diagrams which provide as complete a photographic record of the battle and battlefield as you could wish for.

Strangely, it’s not the images of soldiers struggling through the mud which give this book its power.

Far more haunting are the aerial photographs of the pockmarked terrain or a solitary tank struggling across the cratered moonscape.

Accompanying this comprehensive ‘exhibition’ is a narrative which draws upon scores of diaries, letters and personal accounts of the men who fought in the Ypres salient.

And if the British Army lost its sense of optimism at Passchendaele, it never forgot its duty.

“They were magnificent,” Lt Douglas Wimberley enthused as he watched stretcher bearers carrying the wounded from the battlefield in November.

“You would see them slowly picking their way down the duckboard tracks in the midst of an inferno.

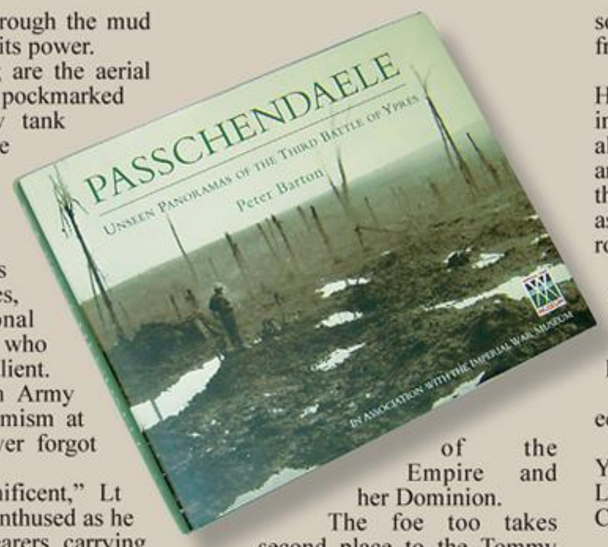
“Then they would disappear altogether in a cloud of smoke as some big shell dropped close, and when it disappeared, on they came at their slow walk.”

Given press reaction to single lives lost in Afghanistan and Iraq 90 years later, it is difficult to comprehend how today’s media machine would react to casualties at Ypres: in October 1917, the British Army suffered 110,000 casualties – 3,500 men a day killed or wounded.

Britain’s newspapers, censored by the Government, celebrated the “most important victory of the year”. The obituary columns told a different story.

The 63rd Division – the Royal Naval Division – suffered 3,000 casualties during six days of heated battle north-west of Passchendaele at the end of that month.

Sadly – and this is one of the few quibbles with Barton’s excellent volume – the Royal Naval Division is a rather peripheral formation in an account dominated by the armies



of the Empire and her Dominion.

The foe too takes second place to the Tommy – reasons of space meant German accounts have largely been omitted.

And yet ‘Fritz’ is omnipresent, drawing condemnation and admiration in equal measure from the British soldier.

“The Fritzes must be fighting like the very demons of hell,” wrote Gunner Aubrey Wade during the first, failed, attempt to seize the village of Passchendaele in mid-October 1917.

The ‘demons of hell’ were ably assisted by all the demonic inventions of the military-industrial complex of the age: chemical warfare, tanks, heavy bombers.

In 1917, says the author, “we see the greatest ingenuity, deliberation, planning and colossal command and personal effort that made up the writhing serpent of a modern military machine at the beginning of the 20th Century.”

And yet, in the final analysis, Passchendaele rested on the shoulders of man, not machines – and sometimes his trusty steed.

“One of the most pitiful and heroic sights is to see the ammunition pack horses bringing up shells and charges,” wrote official photographer Capt Frank Hurley.

“The horses stumble through, sometimes falling into shell craters from which they have to be hauled.

“Oh, it is a wicked, agonising sight. Here and there lay dead, half-buried in mud, horses and broken wagons, all cogently telling some tragedy and horror, but one is immune to all these and passes by as unperturbed as though they were just pieces of rock.”

Officer and poet Siegfried Sassoon wrote the battle’s most famous – and oft quoted – epitaph. “I died in hell – they called it Passchendaele.”

The ordinary Tommy could be equally eloquent.

“They say we shall not go back to Ypres,” a colleague told Pte Arthur Lambert of the Honourable Artillery Company.

“I hope to God we never do,” the trooper responded. He had, he admitted, “never uttered a more fervent prayer”.

Many histories of this terrible battle are little more than scathing indictments of Douglas Haig and his generals, the much-maligned ‘donkeys’ of popular historiography.

Peter Barton passes little judgment on Passchendaele, its conduct, the rights and wrongs of the offensive.

Instead, he provides a compelling narrative. It is the voices of the men, not the author, which chastise the leaders.

In October 1917, Douglas Haig visited a headquarters at the front to give the men a pep talk ahead of the final assault on Passchendaele.

“Gentlemen, it has become apparent that Passchendaele must be taken,” he declared.

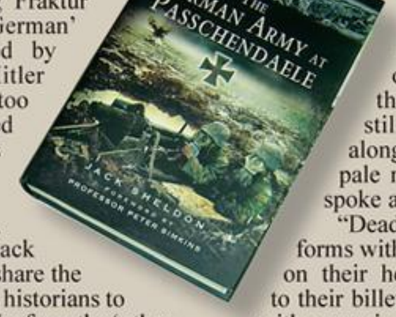
“Some day I hope to be able to tell you why this must be done, but in the meantime I ask you to take my word for it.”

For nine decades, Britons have been waiting for an answer. They will still be awaiting an answer in another nine decades. And never again has a soldier merely taken a general’s word for it.

REGULAR readers of our historical supplements will know that there are two sides to every battle.

Too often, English-speaking historians focus solely on the Allied role in victory between 1914 and 1918 at the expense of our foe, save for a few choice quotes from Ludendorff, Hindenburg and perhaps warrior poet Ernst Jünger.

Reluctance to look at the Great War from the German viewpoint is certainly not due to a lack of sources: although the official archives are incomplete (thanks, in part, to the RAF bombing campaign a generation later) German publishing houses churned out scores of erudite regimental histories *inter alia* in the 1920s. Unfortunately, they did so using Fraktur – the ‘Gothic German’ typescript beloved by printers until Hitler decided it was ‘too Jewish’ and banned it – which demands a trained eye to decipher it.



Fortunately, former soldier Jack Sheldon does not share the reticence of fellow historians to look at the Great War from the ‘other side of the hill’ – or their reluctance to tackle that hideous font.

Having given us the groundbreaking *German Army on the Somme* to put faces and names to the ‘Hun’ who inflicted the worst day on Britain in the history of her Army, the author has now turned his attention to the 1917 campaign with the same thoroughness.

When future historians come to write of Passchendaele one would hope that **The German Army at Passchendaele** (*Pen & Sword*, £25 ISBN 978-184-415-5644) would be a constant companion.

Passchendaele is the common English name for the battle. The Germans never used it; they preferred *Ypern* (German for Ypres) or, more usually, *Flandernschlacht* – the Flanders battle.

Using manifold first-hand accounts, the author shows that the *Flandernkämpfer* – the ‘Flanders warrior’, as Crown Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, the senior German commander at Ypres, called him – bore the privations, misery and horrors of Passchendaele with the same bravery and stoicism as his opponent.

“They simply endured and went on enduring,” says the author.

One *landser* – the German counterpart to the British Tommy – in 13th Bavarian Reserve Infantry Regiment wrote after the onslaught on October 26, which the Royal Naval Division took part in:

“Dog-tired and exhausted, our little band, those who were still alive, stumbled along the road in the pale moonlight. Nobody spoke a single word.

“Deadly serious, the dark forms with the heavy helmets on their heads, headed back to their billets, sick to the heart with mourning for the fallen.”

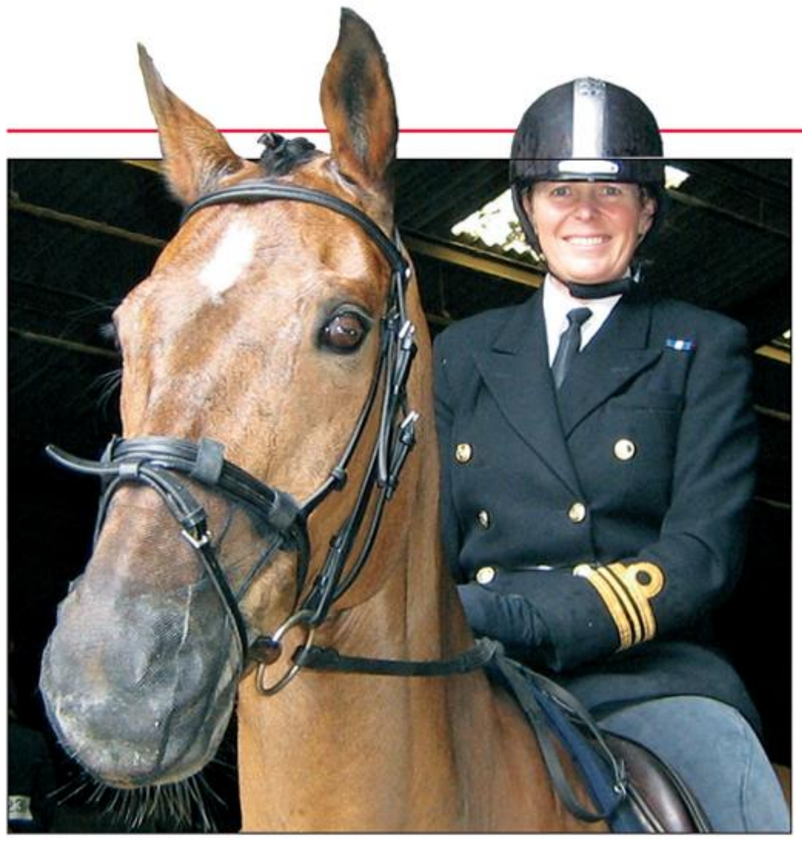
General Hermann von Kuhl, Rupprecht’s Chief-of-Staff, called Third Ypres “the greatest martyrdom of the war”. His master hailed the battle as “a serious defeat for our opponents and a great victory for us”.

Tommy and Fritz alike probably cared little for such tubthumping, as a young German machine-gunner recalled.

“It was war and it had to be fought. We were not soldiers to be having a good time. There was not a man in our crater who need hang his head in shame.”

Read our four-page tribute to the Royal Naval Division at Passchendaele in next month’s *Navy News*

● *‘Good God, did we really send men to fight in that?’ Canadian pioneers toil in the Passchendaele mud, November 1917.*
From Peter Barton’s *Passchendaele: Unseen Panoramas of the Third Battle of Ypres*



Barney's back

A POPULAR veteran of military equestrianism came out of retirement for one day only to make a guest appearance at the Royal Navy and Royal Marines equestrian championships at Southwick Park.

At 25 years old the thoroughbred gelding Lynefoot Barnes, or Barney as he is known, has been owned and competed by Lt Cdr Rachel Firth (*pictured above on Barney*) in a wide variety of equestrian disciplines for almost 18 years.

With a human equivalent age of over 90, Barney stepped down from full competition in 2005 and has been enjoying a very comfortable retirement in Sussex with his stablemate and Rachel's current competition horse, the eight-year-old mare Cromarty.

Nevertheless, such is Barney's general fitness and character she felt that he would enjoy a romp out at one of his favourite venues as a guest entrant in the new riders' competition, competing for fun rather than reward.

Completing a very creditable dressage test considering his general aches and pains, Barney (and rider) followed that with a lively clear round over 75cm fences.

Although past glories have been achieved against much bigger obstacles, both in the ring and cross country, this was an impressive achievement for such a venerable old gentleman and brought a smile to everyone who witnessed it.

During their long association, Rachel has achieved a lot of success with Barney, including wins at the 1999 Larkhill and Sandhurst horse shows and numerous placings in a variety of military and civilian shows.

In 2003, it almost came to an end when horse and rider came to grief at the military section of the Gatcombe Horse Trials. Fortunately, they fell in opposite directions and Rachel survived with nothing more than broken hands and a broken shoulder while Barney was merely concussed.

Rachel herself is now also on the verge of retiring from the Service.

During her equestrian career she has represented the RN virtually every year since 1982; she has served ten years as the secretary of the RN&RM Equestrian Association and in 2005 and 2006 she was the captain of the RN showjumping team.

The officer's young mare, Cromarty is now beginning to realise her true potential and Rachel is looking forward to continuing her competitive activity as a civilian while at the same time keeping Barney fit and active and hopefully enjoying a long and happy retirement.

Not soar losers

THE Senior Service held on to the Inter-Service **hang gliding** gong they snatched from the wings of the RAF and Army 12 months ago – and added an individual title in storm-laden Welsh skies.

The team arrived in southern Wales having spent a week in the skies beforehand honing their skills, so come competition week everyone was on top form and flying their best, ready to defend the title, *writes Lt Steven Blackler, HMS Ark Royal*.

The first day of the competition was a light day on top of the Blorenge mountain near Abergavenny but the furthest flight was only 9.7km (six miles), 300m short of the activating distance so the task was annulled.

Day two was overcast above Merthyr Tydfil and team captain Lt Cdr Rob Dowdell (Lynx Trapper pilot with Flying Standards at Yeovilton) won the day with an excellent flight in testing conditions. Rob (*pictured, right*) covered 40km (25 miles) – double the distance flown by most of the other competitors.

Not even former British Hang Gliding team member and Tornado pilot Sean Kimberly could out-fly our XC hound.

The third day opened under overcast skies – which turned to rain sadly, forcing a 30km (18 mile) task to be cancelled.

Days four and five signalled the start of the flash floods and tornadoes, which marked the end of the competition and the start of the British summer... but by then the Royal Navy had done enough to seal victory.

Rob's superb flight on the second day also meant that he is now finally the Inter-Service champion after being runner up more times than anyone can remember.

Even though the weather was disappointing, the overall result was fantastic and the warm up week proved that the Royal Navy have some very capable hang glider pilots.

The team also has some promising talent coming through the training pipeline so there is no reason why next year we can't win the title for the third year in a row.

More details from **www.rnhpa.co.uk**



RLC show no TLC

Onside with Capt Paul Cunningham, RNFA

BY THE time you read this, the new **football** season will be upon us.

If you are keen to know more about Navy football, I really recommend our website at www.royalnavyfa.com which contains current news and will shortly show all the fixtures for the coming season.

At the end of June, the RN Women were invited to attend a representative match at the Royal Logistic Corps' open day at their home in Deepcut, Surrey.

The confusion as to whether it was an end of season or an early pre-season game, was complicated even more by the weather – what should have been sun, flip flops and factor eight, was soon replaced with umbrellas and wellies.

A different squad saw five new women playing their first game for the Navy, but the heralded return of Becky Webb sadly did not materialise.

The new players were also introduced to the high standards of representative sport as they got changed in a dark tent on pitchside.

The Senior Service started well, with a few meaty tackles being given by AB Jenna MacBeth (Collingwood) on her debut at the back, and the usual determined display in the middle of the park from OM 'Eddy' Edwards (HMS Tyne) and Wtr Naomi Marsh (Nelson).

But with the Navy playing with new partnerships all across the park, the RLC started to get into their stride, and found that the direct route through the middle was causing problems to the RN defence.

After 15 minutes the RLC played a long ball which split the Navy centre backs, and indecision from keeper LMEA Burns (Sultan) enabled the Corps' forward to nip in and slide the ball into the net.

This led to ten minutes of sustained pressure which brought two more goals for the soldiers, but Burns recovered her composure for the final ten minutes of the half to make a couple of good saves which at least kept the RN in the match.

The second period saw a few changes from the Army team and this, coupled with a better performance from the RN led to a much better half.

The Navy had the better possession and was faster in closing down the Army girls when they were in possession of the ball.

The Army were looking flustered by the increase in Navy pace, and mistakes were creeping into their game.

Good defending from the front by both LAEM Linzi Gascoigne (Heron) and Kirstie Moffatt (HMS Cumberland) meant that the Army defenders were misplacing passes, and the RN had a few long-range shots.

After 15 minutes Gascoigne found herself inside the area, but a scuffed shot was easily saved by the Army keeper.

Five minutes later, Wtr Laura Brown was put on up front, and her first move was to link on to a through ball from OM Edwards, and slot the ball past the advancing keeper and pull a goal back.

The Army's response was to bring back on some of their more senior players, and as the Senior Service pushed to get another goal, the spaces started to appear between the defence and midfield, which allowed the Army No.10 more space to work in.

A ball up to the No.10 saw her chip the ball over LMEA Burns in the goal to seal a 4-1 victory.

Overall it was a good outing which saw some promising debuts from the five new players: AET Campbell, ETME Hogan (Sultan), AB Macbeth (Collingwood) Wtr Brown (Nelson), and AB Moffatt (Cumberland).

Turning to the professional game, the Premier League is to waive £250,000 in TV and radio rights revenues to give Service personnel free access to live top-flight football on TV and radio over the next three years.

All three Forces will be able to watch or listen to matches courtesy of BFBS, either on communal TVs in mess decks, barracks and ships and individual TVs or laptops.

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SPORT

Teamworks' team works

TEAMWORKS, the **endurance kart** team run by Lt Kevin Westbrook (RNAS Yeovilton) put in a strong performance in the Southern Endurance Kart Championship held at Barton Stacey, in Hampshire, *writes PO 'Dutchy' Holland, HMS Excellent.*

Testing on the first day was hampered by showers but the track dried up with an hour to go and the team found a good set-up which bode well for race day.

The main event arrived and the weather remained dry.

Rounds four and five were only of three hours duration, which required just one pit stop for a driver change and refuelling.

There was a strong grid of 27 teams, with Lt Westbrook lining up seventh on the grid having held provisional pole position for the majority of the session.

Teamworks were running comfortably in fourth place after half an hour and were threatening the second and third-placed teams until an engine misfire resulted in an unscheduled pit stop. The team finished 16th, determining the starting position for round five. The team's quickest lap time was a mere 0.04 seconds off the fastest lap in the race.

Round five opened with Teamworks fighting through the traffic to eventually finish a very credible sixth place having set some very fast times on the way.

Turf's up at Yeovilton

RNAS Yeovilton's new Astro Turf pitch was officially christened by a festival of sport.

Janet Palmer, the wife of the air station's CO Cdre Chris Palmer, officially opened the pitch before more than 30 football, volleyball and softball teams trotted on to the new playing surface for a series of encounters.

Cdre Palmer led his select hockey side out against a strong RN team, losing 3-2, but the Naval Air Command side triumphed over the RN ladies select team 6-2.

The festival also saw PO Sally Armstrong and Sgt Davies named as Yeovilton's sports personalities of the year for their contributions towards sport and fitness at the Somerset establishment.

The new pitch will be used by the RN ladies hockey side for training and matches and the all-weather facility is also open to local schools and sports sides to use.

Blanc turns boys to men

FOUR budding submariners swapped life in a 'tin can' for Europe's most famous – and perhaps dangerous – mountain as part of team-building exercises.

The quartet – Stuart Harrap from Hull, Ronnie Guffie from Ayrshire, Paul Wright from Wirral and David Simpson from Luton – faced particularly ferocious conditions as they assaulted Mont Blanc.

In fact eight **climbers** on other expeditions scaling the Franco-Italian peak at the same time as the deeps lost their lives in the attempt.

The RN party, thankfully, reached the peak – and came back down again – safely.

And although the climbers came back sombre and sober, one of the team leaders said conquering Mont Blanc had been a useful experience for the trainee deeps.

"On the mountain, I am not looking at boys in a classroom – I am looking at young men under intense pressure. I get to see what they are really like," said team leader WO Glen Bridgeman.

"We need the world's best sailors – and you don't find them in a classroom."



● Surg Lt Dave Potter fires the ball in during the RN's tour of Argentina

Americas calling

AFTER a nine-year hiatus, the RN senior men's hockey team hit the road again – or rather the airways – as they headed to Argentina.

The tour came on the back of an unprecedented period of success for the squad, which has won the Inter-Service title three time in four years and is also the current indoor IS champions, *writes Lt Matt Wesson, RNAS Yeovilton.*

Our first game was played on the day of our arrival in Buenos Aires and although players were clearly tired after 24 hours of travelling, they put in some great performances, especially LAET Richard Potter in goal who went on to get the 'man of the match' award.

We went into half time 2-0 up with goals from Mne Tom Nicoll and Lt Col Rory Copinger-Symes.

The opposition, Club Ciudad De Beunos Aires, came back strongly in the second half and eventually drew level before Mne Nicoll put the Navy ahead with an excellent solo effort to clinch a well-deserved 3-2 victory.

We then got our first taster of some excellent Argentinean hosting. Thankfully we had the weekend to recover – and used the time to see an international rugby game and explore some of the sights of Buenos Aires.

On Monday we played our second game against Club San Martin, who took advantage of a slow start to go 2-0 up at the break.

The RN did well to pull three goals back in the second half when they were finally able to convert some of their numerous chances, but the opposition were soon back on level terms. As the Navy pushed for the victory San Martin capitalised with a counter-attack to take a 4-3 lead.

The RN tried in vain to get another but with a near miss and disallowed goal both by Mne Nicoll it was not meant to be, and we tasted our first defeat of the tour.

Tuesday involved a coach trip to Rosario to face a training session and two further matches.

The first of these was against Jockey Club de Rosario on an international-standard pitch.

The game was the best we had played to date and we drew 2-2. Mne Nicoll yet again was on target with a drag flick from a penalty corner and then LPT Rowan Edwards scored from another short corner after a well-worked routine.

This was justice for Rowan having had a similar goal disallowed in controversial circumstances. The Navy were heading for another well-deserved victory only to be denied when the opposition equalised in the last minute with a highly-controversial goal.

On Saturday we returned to Buenos Aires for a weekend off to rest weary legs and experience some more of what Argentina had to offer which included a tango show and ranch visit.

Our penultimate game was against Quilmes Hockey Club. We were keen to get back to winning ways and put in a good performace to beat them 5-1 with goals from Nicoll (two), Capt Tim Archer, Capt Rich Moore and LPT Rowan Edwards.

Tuesday was sadly our last game against a former internationals invitational side.

The RN's superior fitness soon showed through and and we ran our convincing winners 6-2 with goals from Capt Archer (two), Lt Col Copinger-Symes, Surg Lt Potter, LPT Edwards and Capt Moore.

As it was the end of the tour awards were presented. Mne Nicoll was awarded the 'tourer of the tour' title for his enthusiasm both on and off the pitch.

Capt Tim Archer was named player of the tour (an award he also won in the U23 European tour in 2003) for consistent committed performances in every game throughout the two weeks.

In all our Argentine experience was a fantastic one

It was not only a reward to the squad for some great successes over the past four years, but also helped us build for the future.

The chance to play in some very competitive, high-standard games and train together intensively over the two weeks meant the team definitely improved technically.

It also led to the already superb team spirit being enhanced even further.

By the end of the tour players were already keen to press forward with their preparations for next season to retain both the indoor and outdoor Inter-Service trophies.

Back on home turf, however, the side managed to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory against a touring side from the Indian Air Force, who began strongly.

Gradually the marvellously mesmeric Indian stick skills came to nought, however. Under RN pressure, Indian possession was given away cheaply, encouraging the Navy to hassle and harry and win more possession through some wonderful – even impossible – interceptions and a number of 'no quarters asked' tackles.

The RN opened the scoring from their first short corner; Rowan Edwards' injection from the defence's right hand side was controlled and slipped left to James Moseley to shoot.

His shot rebounded off the keeper's pads and Edwards was there, looping round on a banana run to bury the rebound.

Within seconds of the restart after the Navy's goal, the ball was being wobbled, dribbled and magicked past the RN's right back byline. Goalkeeper Micky Warriner went down horizontally and tried to cut out the inevitable pass to the penalty spot, the ball went over his despairing dive and the second Indian in line Jerom Kujur was able to bury the ball into the empty RN net for 1-1,

A few minutes later and the RN reversed the tables. Good work by Mark Stanton and Mark Dixon made excellent use of retrieved possession and Moseley was able to stamp his class and drilled the ball into a corner with the goalkeeper on his line unable to get his foot close enough.

A ding-dong battle now ensued up to half time and for 34 of the 35 minutes of the second half.

No matter what the Indians did the RN were a match for it.

Unbelievable control, interceptions and tackles were features of a wonderful action-packed second half, spoiled only by two incidents where RN players, feeling hard done by, decided to have a rant at the umpire.

Both players were out of the game for several seconds or more – both incidents could have led to sendings off, but neither did – but those lapses in concentration, probably cumulatively led to the RN conceding a short corner with a minute to go.

The first Indian shot was saved brilliantly, as was a second, but with the keeper still on the ground, the Indian left winger, running diagonally backwards towards the 25 yard point of the sideline, struck the ball flat-stick-reverse leading edge to fly over everyone's heads into the far top right of the goal to level the score.

Full-time whistle, 2-2, the RN had blown it.

Meanwhile, there are two important hockey weekends to look out for this month at HMS Temeraire.

The seven-a-side inter-branch contest is hosted on September 8 and 9 with the emphasis as much on fun as it is on branch bragging rights.

Teams from the Silent Service, warfare, logistics, engineering, medical specialisations, FAA, and RM are all lined up to take part.

The following Sunday, September 16, Temeraire hosts the past vs present match and RN veterans vs England LX side.

For more information on navy hockey see our website www.navy-hockey.co.uk or contact Lt Cdr Alan Walker on 9380 24131.

Neptune spear Seahawk

A SIX from man-of-the-match LPT D Dawson in the final over secured a narrow victory for Scotland over Cornwall in cricket's Navy Cup.

On a pitch which looked very wet first thing, HMS Neptune crucially won the toss and quickly decided to put HMS Seahawk into bat, *writes Lt Cdr David Cooke, RNCC spokesman.*

Despite a very classy 52 from SA Foster, wickets fell steadily and only a late flurry from LA R Joslyn (21 from eight balls) helped the air station to a respectable 177-7 from their 35 overs. Bowling, SA Gilbert took 3-15 in his eight overs.

In response, it was Gilbert who set the foundations for the Scottish base's triumph with a swift 18, followed by an impressive 66 from 48 balls by Lt E Moss-Ward.

The most important contribution, however, came from LPT Dawson, who not only forced Lt Moss-Ward to run singles – against the latter's wishes – but who also perfectly paced his innings of 55.

At the start of the chase, Neptune required five runs an over to take the cup; and so it was that come over 35, they required five for victory, with the club swinger hitting that six off the second ball.

Rear Admiral Charles Montgomery presented the trophy to the Scottish side after a day of entertaining RN cricket played in the true spirit of the game.

Burnaby Road was also the venue for the three-day Inter-Services Cricket Festival.

Players, officials and spectators were blessed with almost unbroken summer sunshine after weeks of rain and uncertainty about the dampness of the wickets.

The ground staff had prepared a good standard, if somewhat green, set of wickets for the event.

The RAF and Army clashed on day one with the soldiers triumphing by 49 runs.

The RN locked horns with the Air Force on the tournament's second day. Their early order batsmen made a solid if not spectacular start with opener Cpl Sean Needham (Cdo Logs RM) holing out on 18, skipper Lt Cdr Paul Snelling (Abbey Wood) needlessly run out on 36, Lt Tim Burt (815 NAS) bowled through the gate on 31.

However, new cap Lt John Batley (DNR) was quietly accumulating runs at the other end and as wickets fell around him, including Lt Jonathan Parker (DCSA) 27, he managed to score 50 on his debut and ended the innings at 52 not out – a very good performance.

The RN total of 212-6 was going to be a difficult target to defend, and even more so after a very loose early over got the RAF off to a flying start.

With their score standing at 126 – 3 (Lumb again scoring well with 44) with plenty of overs in hand, the situation did not look good, however the Navy bowlers stuck to their task and the wily old Cdr Chris Slocombe (Abbey Wood) nagging away with line and length taking 3-36 leading the fight back, a turn of fortune was becoming possible.

Parker speared three batsmen with terrific pace, new cap S/Lt John Jackson (Atherstone) bowling extremely well took 1-34 in ten overs, and all of a sudden the airmen were 198-7 then 200-8, and even at 211-9 prospects of an RN win looked good.

It was not to be though as the last RAF batsmen swiped at a good ball from Parker which raced away to the boundary.

A most exciting end to the game – but a win for the RAF with 1.1 overs to spare.

For his magnificent bowling achievement in the RN innings of 1-10 in ten overs, S Cooper (RAF) was named man of the match.

On the final day, playing on the driest wicket of the week, the Army won the toss and elected to bat.

The Navy opening bowlers of Parker and CPO R Astley (Chatham) immediately sent the Army openers back to the pavilion and when Parker trapped the very dangerous Army skipper Webb, LBW for 2, the opponents were 17-3 with top batsmen back in the hutch.

How could the Navy lose from this position? M Heyns answered part of that question by showing how easy it is to bat at Burnaby Road, hitting an impressive 65 in relatively short time.

Backed up by O Lerwell (33) and S Hole (68), the Army finished their innings at 245–7, the highest total of the week so far.

The reply by the Navy was not good. Apart from Needham (20), Snelling (30) and Astley (18), no-one else made double figures and the RN innings crumbled to some very good swing bowling from O Burwell (4-23) in ten overs, to a paltry 104 all out.

Praise for RNRU refs

THE RN's **rugby union** referees marked another year of successful officiating in the sport in Portsmouth.

RFU President Bob Rogers was guest of honour at the dinner for the 100 RN referees and their guests, praising the work of Senior Service officials across the board in supporting the sport.

Cdr Roger Baileff was named RN Referee of the Season for his achievements with the Guinness Premiership and also collected the coveted CS trophy.

Roger is a Level 6 RFU official and also a National Panel touch judge, who officiated at every Premiership ground last season, as well as European Cup matches and World Cup qualifiers.

Lt Cdr Duncan McClement was named newcomer of the season, Cdr Stewart Kilby earned his Colours officiating at the Army-RAF senior clash, and WO Rich Wheelan was promoted to Level 5.

The next entry-level course for budding referees will be run by CPO Paul Burton at HMS Temeraire from September 17 and 19. Details on 0117 913 6553.

Ladies shine at Inter-Services

THIS year's Inter-Service **fencing** championships on the Navy's home turf at HMS Drake were momentous for all concerned, *writes Lt Cdr 'Dicky' Barton, chairman RNAFA*.

The ladies team outshone the men, starting off with a win in the Inter-Services triangular match trophy for the first time in 13 years.

The female team comprised Lts Andreana Glendinning, Amanda Hale, and Sacha Brook, Lt Cdr Helga Budden, LLOGS(Pers) Rebecca French and LET(ME) Gemma Wollaston.

It was a very close-run thing with just one hit separating the RN from the Army after all the fights were complete.

The men's team came third having fought a strong battle; they only lost by odd hits.

The individual events opened with the sabre.

Overall the Navy did well with a silver in the ladies' competition for Lt Cdr Budden and bronzes for both Lt Keith Bowers in the men's and Lt Glendinning in the ladies'.

There were also two team competitions held: the three-person and six-person inter units.

These both require fencers at each of the three weapons and JSU Northwood, with a spread of experienced fencers, dominated never losing a fight and taking both titles.

This left the new fencers from BRNC Dartmouth in their wake but they were still able to do well against the other services coming fourth.

The third day saw the foil competition: LET(ME) Wollaston took the silver and both Lt Cdr Budden and Lt Bowers took bronze.

The épée on the final day of the contest saw several fencers arrive just for that weapon – opening up the competition.

A newcomer to the RN team, S/Lt John Wright, took first place in the plate competition and Capt Will Hale RMR only fell behind in the last minute of the final and had to settle for the silver medal.

The ladies had some very close-run matches with LET(ME) Wollaston coming third.



● *A lunge from an Army competitor at this year's Inter-Services contest at HMS Drake*

Picture: PO(Phot) Darren MacDonald, FRPU West

Army triumph in triathlon

THE Inter-Services Olympic distance **triathlon** took place in and around Wimbleball Lake on Exmoor.

Expectations of breaking the Army stranglehold on the team championships were high as the standard of the RN squad just keeps on improving and most of the main 'players' were available.

The race venue was already well known as it was the same location for this year's UK 70.3 championships; race winner Aussie professional Chris McCormack commented that it was the hardest ironman in the world owing to the very hilly and technical bike course, not to mention the run, but at least the swim was flat.

Increasingly heavy rain and wind greeted the 100-plus triathletes on race day, making the twisting descents on the bike even more challenging.

The 1,500m swim was a single, triangular lap, well marshalled by canoeists. The wind made quite a chop on the water but most got through it okay before setting off on the 300m uphill run to the transition.

The RN squad already knew the single-lap 50km (31 mile) bike course – it had already ridden it during a previous training day.

The rain had washed a lot of grit on to the road and there were the usual punctures and mechanical problems to contend with.

After the cycling a two-lap hilly 10km run beckoned for the tired-legged triathletes.

Overall the Navy team achieved some very creditable results, finishing a very close second to the Army in the men's elite with six athletes coming in the top 15.

This would almost certainly have been seven – making the result even closer – had it not been for an unfortunate mechanical problem for LD Billy Holman.

The veteran team were also beaten into second place behind the Army but by the narrowest of margins (2 points), with four athletes placed in the top seven finishers.

Invidually Cpl Gary Gerrard dominated the men's competition, yet again winning both the open and over 40 category for the fifth time in eight years.

In the ladies' open category LMA Mhairi Muir continued her impressive season with a creditable fourth behind three very strong Army triathletes.

Although in the end the results were a little disappointing, this was nevertheless the most successful Inter-Services Olympic distance event for several years.

With an ever-increasing membership, coaching for all standards, training weekends, organised novice races and subsidised training camps it is no wonder the results keep getting better and better for Navy triathlon. See www.rnrmtri.co.uk for more info.

Channel dash

Continued from back page

for the Combined Service side which led 4-2 at half time.

In fact the powerful Police team, full of some very big men, were just sussing out their opponents and in the last two quarters went up a gear or two and powered their way to a 10-5 victory.

In the swimming, Lt Rick Andrews (HMS Vanguard) sprinted the length of the 400m freestyle to win in 4m 2s, then S/Lt Joel Roberts (BRNC Dartmouth) smashed the one-minute barrier to win the 100m butterfly.

No one could compete with Commonwealth Games hopeful Mne Joe Tellett (RM Stonehouse) as he took just 23 seconds to take the 50m freestyle sprint and then he went on to win the blue riband 100m freestyle with ease in 57 seconds – and by a margin of nearly 10 metres.

Mne Dan McSweeney (42 Cdo) staked his claim for elite athlete status with two tremendous winning swims: 1m 7s for the 100m breaststroke, then 2m 33s for the 200m stroke.

Lt Cdr Witt got close to the two-minute mark in winning the 200m freestyle, and then clocked up another win in the strength-sapping 200m individual medley.

Next Roberts weighed in with a 61s 100m backstroke and a win was on the cards for the men's event even before the start of the relays.

The ladies were on course for victory in their match with Lt Smart and LMA Mhairi Muir (DMSTC) earning six and three points respectively in the 200m freestyle.

The powerful Smart then went out and led from the front, cruising to a notable victory in the 200m medley.

Usually the police and Civil Service swimmers are always 'in with a shout' in this annual fixture, but this year the Forces' men's and women's teams took them apart – thanks in no small measure to the Royal Navy swimmers.

Going into the relays with a small lead, the all-RN men's team for the 50m freestyle relay of Tellett, Dawson, Witt and McSweeney swam a phenomenal time of 1m 41.28s

Lt Smart then turned out in the final leg to win the medley relay for the ladies, before most of the Senior Service swimmers took part in the 16x1 lengths of 25m freestyle team relay.

Fittingly it was Joe Tellett who caught – and beat – his hapless mere mortal police opponent, having given him a couple of yards start on the final leg.

The times they are a tumblin'

THE RN and RM Cycling Association has reached an all-time high with more than 300 riders – many of whom compete throughout the year taking on some of the best cyclists and teams on offer, *writes CPO(PT) Sean Childs*.

This is clearly put to the test at National Championships, where riders usually have to gain a respectable qualifying benchmark time before they are even allowed to take on some of the fastest riders, including former Olympic and Commonwealth Games competitors.

The first of these was the National Ten-Mile Championships, which took place on a rolling course near Peterborough featuring five Roundabouts.

CPO(PT) Childs (HMS Drake) had posted one of the top ten fastest times in the country last season (19min 21 sec) and was therefore seeded fourth on the start sheet.

Although he put in a decent performance he missed out on a top-ten place with 13th in 21m 14s.

CPO(MEA) Aran Stanton (HMS Nelson) also found good form and his 21m 52s gave him 44th on the day with Mark Gorman (Ex CPO – associate member) crossing the line in 24m 29s for 136th. The RNRMCA finished 11th overall.

The 'Blue Ribbon' event of the calendar is the National 25-Mile Championships at Skelmersdale, Merseyside.

Childs put in a gutsy effort to again finish 13th on 53m 44s, whilst Stanton was continuing to improve with a 36th in 55m 52s. This race alone saw an Olympic champion, a Commonwealth athlete and British champion, not to mention the Olympic Academy riders taking part.

Four of our riders made their way to Tempsford, Bedfordshire for the National 50-Mile Championships.

The RNRMCA cyclists were hoping for good things after their encouraging start to the ten and 25-mile events.

Childs set an RN competition and club record when he recorded a 1h 48m 57s to cover the distance, but was disappointed to finish 23rd.

It was close-run thing between him and his old training partner Stanton (*pictured*) who set a personal best just two seconds slower than Childs to take 25th place.

The biggest improvement of the day came from C/Sgt Stuart Edwards who beat the two-hour barrier for the first time to take 80th place. This also gave the RN fifth in the team category, thus setting them a new team record. Gorman also set a personal best with 2h 4m 15s for 102nd.

The National Team Time Trial event was held near Port Talbot, South Wales on a very wet day.

The RNRMCA already made an impression by fielding more teams than any other club in the country, three men's and one ladies.

Each team consists of three riders who worked together to create the fastest time over 25 miles.

Our 'A' team of Childs, Stanton and Lt Steve Kelly (HMS Drake) were hoping for a top-six finish, but still came a creditable equal 10th in 54m 20s. The 'B' team of PO(D) Keith Satchwell (HMS Drake), CPO(MEA) Andy Phipps (HMS Sultan MASU) and Edwards came 24th in 57m 35s whilst the 'C' trio of Lt Cdr Lee Sanderson (MoD Abbeywood), RS Stuart Cox (PJHQ Northwood) and Gorman were 26th in 59m 41s.

A special mention must go to the ladies team; many were riding their first proper time trial and although they experienced some difficulties along the route, they still gave it everything right up to the finish.

The team of LNN Lucy Norman (HMS Nelson), LMA Mhairi Muir (DSTMC) and Rachel Clay (associate member) finished in 45th (eighth ladies team) in 1h 11m 42s.

Steve Mercer (ex marine – associate member) was our only competitor in the National 100-Mile Championships in Lancashire.

The rolling course proved to be a real challenge and he finished a creditable 44th in 4h 48m 44s in his first 100 race.

A week later and Bob Richards (ex CPO – associate member) became the first RN rider to tackle the National 24-Hour Championships in many years.

The race is run continuously and at night competitors have to fix lights to their bikes so they can see where they are going.

Come the next day and having crossed the line safely, Richards – a novice at this distance – covered just over an amazing 383 miles for 30th position.

That same weekend saw 16 of our riders enter the RN 50-Mile Championships near Buckfastleigh, which was incorporated into the Mid-Devon CC 50-Mile open event.

Suffering a puncture at the start, Stanton was immediately ruled out as having no spare wheel, so the pressure was off Childs as he came away with a four-minute win over his rivals in 1h 52m 4s, setting a new course record in the process.

Kelly was fifth overall and took the RN runner-up spot with a stunning time of 1h 56m 50s in his first ever ride over the distance.

Another novice, Sanderson took the third RN position when he finished in 2h 3m 33s.

The highlight of the year so far was the National 12-Hour Championships near York.

This was one of the key races for the club this year and probably its best chance of acquiring a national individual or team medal.

Childs was lying third after the first 100 miles, but his early efforts coupled with strong winds began to take their toll and he eventually slipped back to finish sixth, having covered just over 276 miles – seven miles longer than the previous RN record he set in 2005.

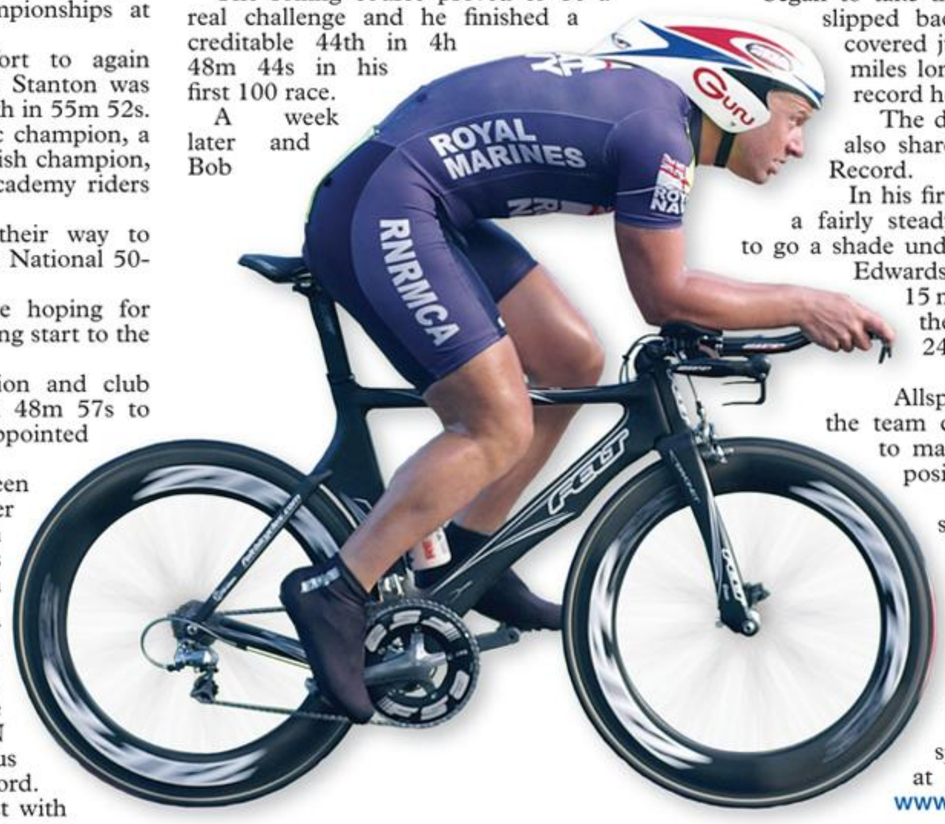
The distance also meant that he also shares the Combined Services Record.

In his first 12hr event, Stanton had a fairly steady but uncomfortable ride to go a shade under 260 miles for 13th and Edwards, out of action for just over 15 minutes due to a puncture at the mid-way point, completed 242 miles for 26th.

Unfortunately Team Swift Allsports proved too strong in the team category and the RN had to make do with the runner-up position.

September will again see the annual rivalry between the Services as the RN defend both their individual and team ten and 25-mile championship titles against the Army and RAF over a weekend of intense racing near Poole.

More details on the sport from CPO Childs at childss@a.dii.mod.uk or www.navycycling.org.uk



PFI lifeline?

THE RN **Sailing** Association is looking at a possible private finance initiative to support its activities in the future.

The 72-year-old association is one of the founders of global yacht races, responsible for 11 boats around RN bases.

It no longer receives funding from the newly-combined RN charities, which have supported it for decades, and so now it is looking into shared ownership to provide the same level of – or improved – sailing facilities across the RN, reducing the costs to a level which can be borne by establishments alone.

With base funds also under pressure, however, there is a fear that the findings of the PFI study will be rejected.

And without the support of the central charity, establishments may also decide to withdraw their financial support – leaving the yachts without any funding, eventually leading to their demise.

Next month



'The most God-forsaken spectacle' – the Royal Navy at Third Ypres



'Real strides' – the sailors and Royal Marines training Iraq's Navy



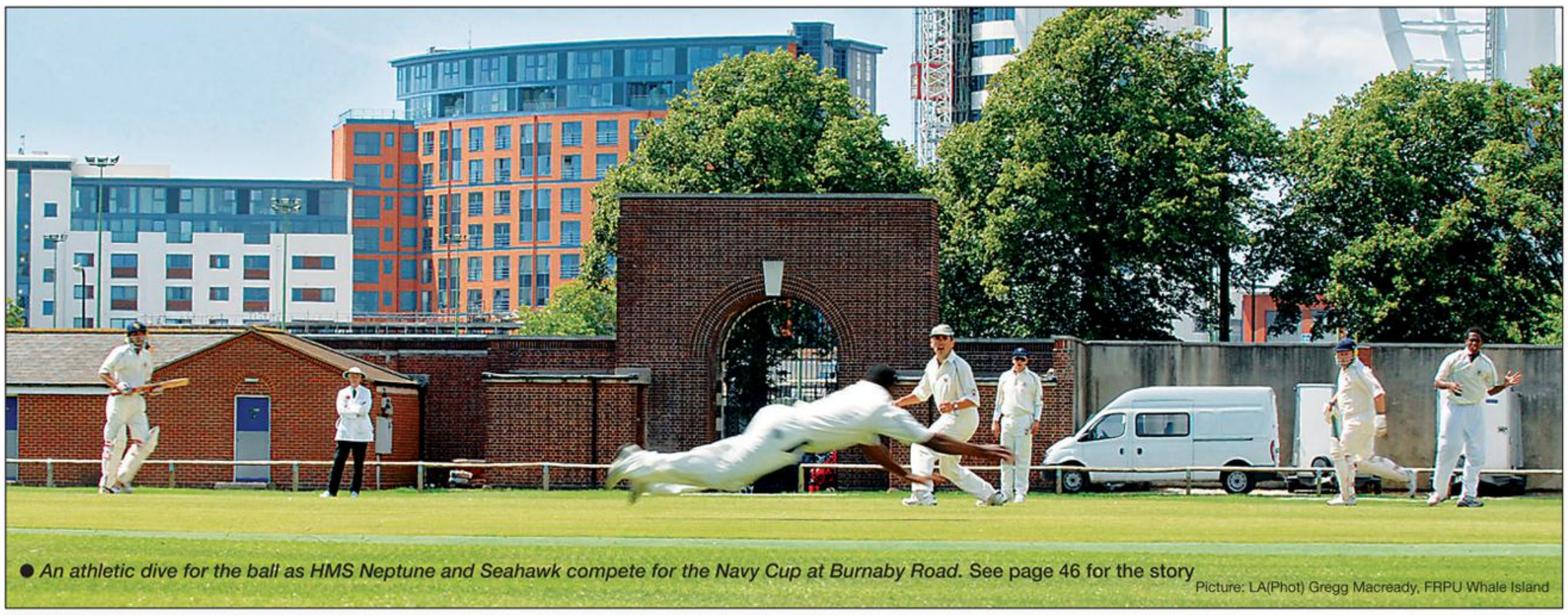
Net gains – a 'fine' summer for the Fishery Protection Squadron



'Almost a civilising effect' – 15 years of women at sea in the RN

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SPORT



● *An athletic dive for the ball as HMS Neptune and Seahawk compete for the Navy Cup at Burnaby Road.* See page 46 for the story

Picture: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready, FRPU Whale Island

Navy's cross purpose

A SEXTET of RN **swimmers** powered their way to victory in the first Inter-Services Channel relay race.

The team arrived at Cap Gris Nez near Calais more than half an hour ahead of their nearest rivals, the Army, after taking it in turns to spend an hour at a time in the cool waters between England and France.

The race began in the darkness at Shakespeare Beach outside Dover with the RAF, Army and Army Air Corps lined up against the Senior Service team. CPO(MA) Mark Franklin (MDHU Portsmouth) was the first RN swimmer into the water; he would be followed eventually by OM Gemma Howells (RNAS Yeovilton), Lt Steve Berry (Collingwood), Sarah Buck (BRNC), Lt Caroline Smart (Sultan), and Lt Cdr Alister Witt (HMS Excellent).

The water was choppier and colder (a paltry 14°C) than it had been at the height of summer for a cross-Channel.

"The start of the race was like a scene from a jailbreak," said Lt Cdr Witt. "There were four swimmers dressed only in trunks on a beach illuminated by individual spotlights."

The Crabs set the pace initially, but the RN took the lead during the second leg of the challenge – and the other Services spent the rest of the race fighting for the runners-up spots.

By the time the swimmers closed in on the French coast, the teams were diverging to take account of the tides; the RN headed east, their rivals headed west.

It proved a wise decision, although the Senior Service swimmers enjoyed a few close shaves as the support boat looked out not merely for commercial ships but also gannets, apparently known to dive on swimmers (attracted by the splashing and thrashing, we're told).

"The navigation of the shipping lanes provided a few close moments when larger container vessels breezed past," Lt Cdr Witt said. "Thanking our lucky stars that they missed, we then had to put up with their wash for the next few minutes."



● *Lt Steve Berry powers his way through the Channel in his second leg of the relay*

Contending with shipping wasn't the worst part of the race. No, the worst part was that first hour-long swim in the darkness, diving into a black, rough sea.

"That was by far the worst part of the crossing – when you touch things or things touch you in the middle of the Channel in the dark, you can do nothing more than keep on swimming until your hour is over," said Lt Cdr Witt.

The team touched French soil, or rather French rocks, after 11h 6m in the water.

Thanks to tides the sextet had actually covered 30 miles, not the 21-mile as-the-crow-flies distance between Britain and France.

It fell to OM Howells (*pictured below about to leap into the water*) to swim the final leg to victory.

The team then celebrated for three minutes at Gris Nez before heading back to Blighty by boat (French Customs allowed them to stay no longer).

"There wasn't one member of the team that was able to pull themselves out of the water after their second spell in the water – each person had given their all to try to secure victory," said Lt Cdr Witt.

"Having completed the crossing, I think we confirmed that we were probably mad, but if asked whether we'd do it again, I think most of us would say 'yes'."

Lt Berry, a veteran of the last RN Channel relay in 1996, added: "It's just an awesome event which cannot be underestimated.

"More people have climbed Everest than swum the Channel.

"There may have been many questioning our sanity but when this event occurs in the future, most of the same team members will be vying for places."

The Army took second place, the RAF third with the Army Air Corps bringing up the rear.

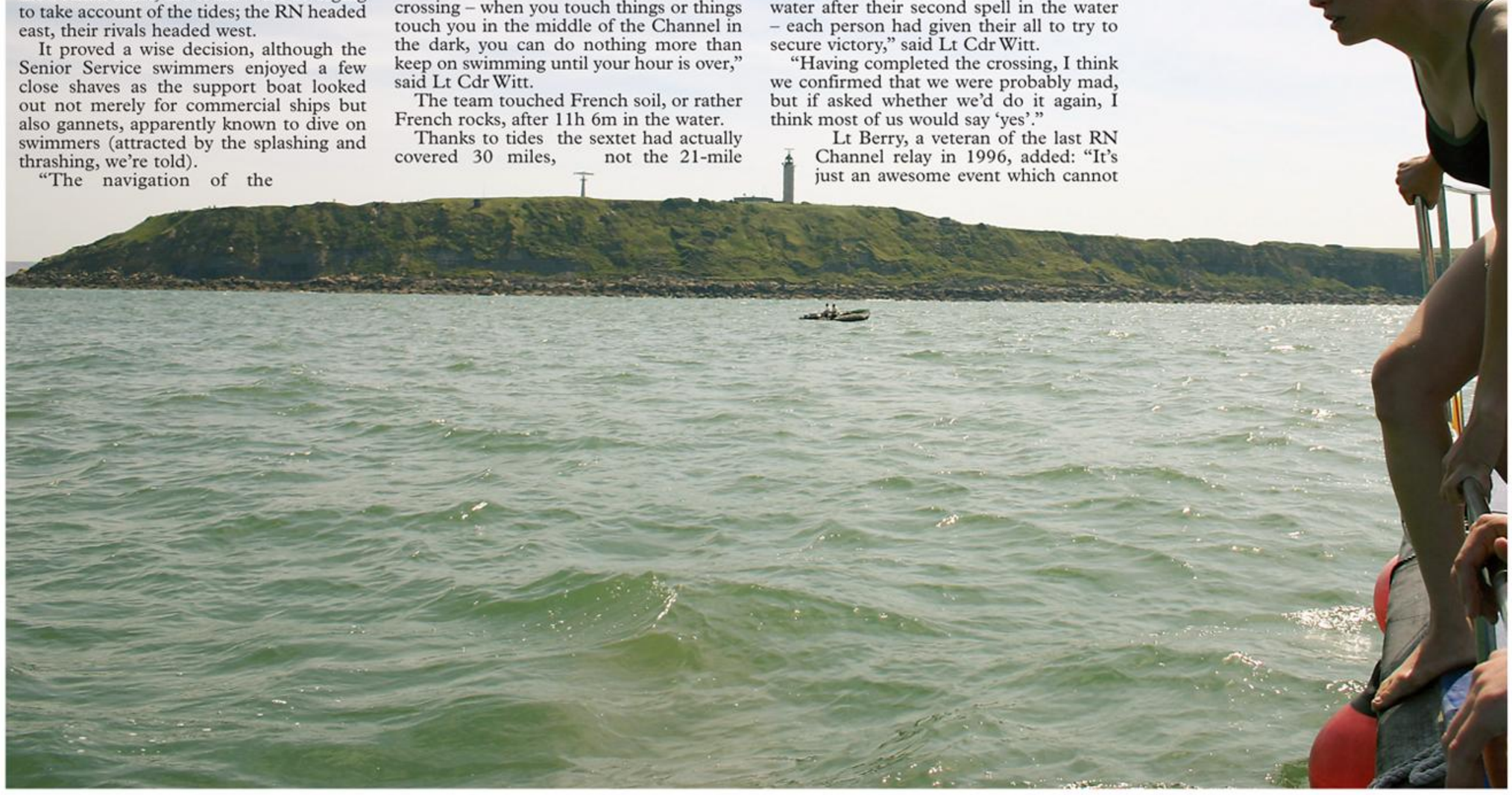
Not content with swimming the Channel, Lt Buck married RAF team captain Simon Buchan ten days after the swim; the couple honeymooned in New Zealand... where they just happened to compete in an open water race.

Returning to more regular water-borne activities, three RN **water polo** players were selected for the Combined Services team for the triangular CS-Police-Civil Service contest at RAF Cranwell, as were eight swimmers.

The civvies were dispatched 16-11, but the police proved tougher opponents.

MA Mark Edmonds (Cdo Logs Regt Medical Squadron), Mne Rob French (42 Cdo) and the experienced Lt Keith Considine (RN/RAF Cranwell) turned out

Continued on page 47



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